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MEMORIAL EDITION

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OF

COLLECTED WORKS

OF

W. J. FOX.

VOL. I.

LECTURES, SERMONS, ETC., PRIOR TO 1824.

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ON

THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST,

THE CORRUPTIONS OF CHRISTIANITY,

AND OTHER

LECTURES AND SERMONS,

PRIOR TO 1824.

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PREFACE.

SHORTLY after the decease of WILLIAM JOHNSON FOX, which took place on Friday, June 3, 1864, a Committee was assembled to consider the best form of a Memorial of his invaluable services to social and political progress, and especially to that freedom of inquiry in religion which he ever regarded as a *duty* inseparable from the *right* of private judgment.

The Committee unanimously resolved to publish a Memorial Edition of Mr. Fox's Works, exhibiting the various phases of his mind in reference to theology, politics, education, literature, and criticism.

The Memorial Edition, in twelve volumes, of which the first volume is now issued, will be found to contain (with the exception of the four volumes of *Lectures to the Working Classes**):

1. Nearly all the Discourses published during the life of Mr. Fox;
2. Numerous Lectures, supplementary to those on Religious Ideas, and on other subjects, left in the state of Ms. Reports, and placed at the disposal of the Committee by Mr. Fox's daughter, Mrs. Bridell;
3. The Anti-Corn-Law Speeches, and the Letters of a Norwich Weaver-Boy, both now first collected;
4. Articles on Dramatic and Literary Criticism, and Selections from other contributions to periodical literature.

The theological portion of the Memorial Edition will show the development of religious ideas in Mr. Fox's mind, from the time when he accepted some of the miraculous elements of historical Christianity, down to the period of his rejecting them altogether, in accordance with the conclusions of a scientific method of investigation, honestly and fearlessly pursued. The genius of Mr. Fox always prompted him to take a firm hold on that which is essential and enduring; and hence it will be found that these modifications of his opinions have done very little to diminish the value of his early discourses in the estimation even of those who have fuller sympathy with the latest developments of his thought.

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* It was thought inexpedient to extend the bulk of the Memorial Edition by the addition of these Lectures; but the Committee hope to be enabled to issue them hereafter.

The same quality of Mr. Fox's mind enabled him to give an abiding interest to addresses delivered on special occasions, and will cause the Anti-Corn-Law Speeches to be read, in their collected form, with a delight akin to that experienced by the vast audiences who were instructed by their philosophy, charmed by the beauty and variety of their illustrations, and roused to enthusiasm by an eloquence which few of the most famous orators have equalled, and none surpassed.

The publication of the Memorial Edition places on permanent record the important position taken by Mr. Fox, as one of the earliest and most influential leaders in this country of that new reformation which is effecting a change in the religious opinions of the civilised world not less extensive or less important, while more thorough, than that which resulted from the labours of Luther and his colleagues. Since the delivery of Mr. Fox's lectures, historical criticism has made a remarkable advance, and many fresh discoveries in science have strengthened and popularised the conviction of that unchangeable order in the arrangements of nature which is inconsistent with orthodox creeds. Thus the principles long ago enunciated by him are now widely accepted; and those who follow him in exhibiting the natural conformity between reason and religion may escape the odium that assailed him by taking shelter under the writings of theological professors and ecclesiastical dignitaries, who now proclaim, though without full acknowledgment of their consequences, no small portion of the truths he taught.

THE
COLLECTED WORKS OF W. J. FOX.

LETTERS TO THE REV. JOHN PYE SMITH, D.D. ON THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST:

Occasioned by his Sermon, preached March 11, 1813, *before the Patrons and Students of the Protestant Dissenting Academy at Homerton.*

[1813.]

LETTER I.—ON SACRIFICES IN GENERAL.

DEAR SIR,—It was with considerable interest that I saw announced for publication your sermon on the Sacrifice of Christ. Happy in having had opportunities of observing and admiring, during the period of our personal intercourse, the candour, judgment, and learning by which you are so honourably distinguished, I rejoiced in your being appointed by those who may be supposed to represent the whole Calvinistic body, to bring such a subject into fair and full discussion. In the perusal of your discourse my expectations were not disappointed. The critical acumen which you have displayed, the number and variety of the sources from which you have drawn arguments, the apparent cogency with which those arguments are stated and enforced, the comprehensiveness of your plan, and the harmony of its several parts, together with the seriousness and earnestness which pervade the whole, cannot but have given abundant satisfaction to those who called you to such a labour; while in every friend of religious truth they must produce the conviction, that if the doctrine of atonement by the vicarious sufferings of Christ fail to obtain credence, it is not for want of an advocate whose talents, character, and acquirements are such as to command universal respect. If I shrink not from the task of publicly animadverting on your discourse, it is not that I am unconscious of a disparity which must be to every one sufficiently obvious, but because from you I have learned to consider the defence of truth as one of the first of duties, and to examine with freedom, and reject if unproved, the dicta of any human authority, however illustrious. Perhaps these pages may serve as an apology for my relinquishment of a doctrine in the belief of which I was educated, which I once regarded as an essential part of the Christian system, and of which to render me a useful defender and propagator was the object of your instructions while I resided in the academy which is, and will, I hope, long remain, under your able superintendence.

Your sermon commences with some remarks on the nature of ancient sacrifices, the tendency of which is to prove that they were founded on the principle of vicarious suffering, and designed to prefigure the sacrifice of Christ. The description of them which you have introduced, however necessary it may be to your argument and your system, must not be allowed to pass without objection. It is as follows: "a sacrifice, properly so called, is the solemn infliction of death on a living creature, generally by effusion of its blood, in a way of religious worship; and the presenting of this act to the Deity, as a supplication for the pardon of sin, and a supposed mean of compensation for the insult and injury thereby offered to his majesty and government" (p. 4). If this definition be admitted, we must strike from the list of "sacrifices properly so called" a large proportion of all that were ever offered. It will also follow that Christ himself was not a proper sacrifice; for his death was not inflicted "in a way of religious worship," nor was the act of murdering him presented to the Deity, by those concerned in it, for the purposes which you have mentioned.

The following authorities will show that your definition is not sufficiently comprehensive, in relation either to heathen or to Jewish sacrifices. "In respect to sacrifices in those early times, it was usual for people of every profession to make some returns to the gods for the benefits they enjoyed. This acknowledgment was generally made out of the increase that they were particularly blessed with. Among the Egyptians it consisted originally in handfuls of corn, grass, and of the lotus, with other fruits of the earth. In process of time they added myrrh, frankincense, and cassia for the service of the altar. Such were the offerings of the ancient Egyptians. On the other hand, the shepherd's increase was from his fold only; and his offerings were the firstlings of his flock" (Bryant's *Anc. Mythol.* vol. vi. p. 175, 8vo edit.). "If he be not able to bring two turtle-doves, or two young pigeons, then he that sinned shall bring for his offering the tenth part of an epha of fine flour for a sin offering: he shall put no oil upon it, neither shall he put any frankincense thereon; for it is a sin offering. Then shall he bring it to the priest, and the priest shall take his handful of it, even a memorial thereof, and burn it on the altar, acccording to the offerings made by fire unto the Lord: it is a sin offering. And the priest shall make an atonement for him as touching his sin that he hath sinned in one of these, and it shall be forgiven him: and the remnant shall be the priest's as a meat offering" (Leviticus v. 11, 12, 13). There are many cases of inanimate and mixed sacrifices in the Mosaic ritual; but this is selected as belonging to that class (sin offerings) in which your argument requires the shedding of blood as essential.

You object to the notion that the worship by sacrifices "was of the nature of a present by way of homage to the Supreme Being:" but surely, sir, it is some recommendation of that definition that it may include every kind of sacrifices, while by yours all vegetable, and some animal offerings, which both sacred and profane writers have distinguished by the same general terms, are necessarily excluded. If, on the presentation of certain offerings, the pardon of offences was implored on the one hand, and granted on the other, they were not the less on that account acts of homage to the Supreme Being. But this, you say, would represent the sacrifice of Cain as "more rational" than that of Abel. Not *more* so; for Abel being a shepherd, the same homage to the Giver of all things that required Cain to present the fruits of the ground, would require of him the firstlings of his flock. And if both had presented their offerings with the same pious dispositions, we have no good reason to suppose they would not have been equally accepted. Dr. Magee has endeavoured, from other considerations, to prove that the sacrifice of Abel could not possibly be of the nature of a gift; but the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews was of a different opinion. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of *his gifts*."*

Much of your reasoning rests upon the proposition that "the ancient sacrifices were originally designed as symbols, emblems, and representations of the great work (of satisfying divine justice by vicarious suffering) for the effecting of which the Messiah was promised to fallen man" (p. 16): an assertion which appears to me destitute of any thing like sufficient evidence.

Sacrifices might be originally of divine authority, but it is by no means certain that they were. Their original institution is not recorded: and yet, if your view of their design be correct, there was no fact which it so much behoved the historian of the first age to rescue from the uncertainty of tradition and the equivocal testimony of symbolical representation. It must have been a fact of the first importance; and his silence is a strong presumption, not perhaps against their original divine institution merely as acts of worship, but against their having been designed emblems of a future transaction of so much consequence to mankind.

Vegetable and animal sacrifices appear to be of equal antiquity. If the one originated in a divine command, it is probable that the other did also. If so, we have no reason to suppose that they had not both the same design; and that design, to apply to both, could not be the representation of vicarious suffering. It has been argued† that the practice could not be of gradual growth, from vegetable to animal sacrifices, because "the transition is itself inconceivable." It may be so: but the transition from animal to vegetable sacrifices is equally inconceivable. It is fair therefore to infer that they sprang from the same principle, the only principle which will alike account for both, that of rendering to God, as an acknowledgment of his bounty, a part of what he has so liberally bestowed.

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* Hebrews xi. 4.

† Magee on the Atonement, v. ii. p. 151.

Faith in a prefigured, suffering Messiah must, according to your view of sacrifices, have been essential to the divine acceptance of them. In the patriarchal offerings which God is represented as regarding with complacency, we nowhere find this required by him, or exercised by the worshiper. There is no proof whatever that those holy men who lived before the time of Moses entered into that view of their offerings which you consider as the design of God in their institution.

In the Mosaic ritual, where all kinds of sacrifices are described with the utmost minuteness, there is not a single reference to a greater sacrifice, of which they were merely emblems; not a single intimation that they were typical of the future sufferings of the Son of God; not one hint of what you tell us was the design and object of the whole! If your notion of the prospective reference of sacrifices prevailed before the promulgation of the Levitical institutions, they must, by so profound a silence, have powerfully tended to destroy it: their silence was equivalent to a formal contradiction. If it was not previously entertained, how can you account for the omission of a declaration which was far more important to the glory of God, the comfort of man, and the utility of revelation, than all the ceremonial directions that were ever delivered?

Nor do we find good men under the law better informed on this subject than those who lived before the law. In the whole compass of sacred history, from Adam to Moses, and from Moses to Malachi, we meet with no trace of any known connection between sacrifices and the vicarious sufferings of the promised Messiah. Ceremonial observances are brought into contrast with holiness of heart and life frequently;* with a future and more valuable sacrifice, never.

As you will doubtless contend that the four passages adduced in your sermon from the Old Testament, in proof of the representative nature of sacrifices, are opposed to this assertion, it is necessary to advert to them. The first is Psalm xl. 6-8: "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not. A body hast thou prepared for me. Burnt offering and sin offering thou requirest not. Then said I, Lo, I come! in the volume of the book it is written of me: I delight to do thy will, O God; yea, thy law is within my heart." "The leading idea in this distinguished passage," you observe (p. 17), "manifestly is, that the Messiah should supersede all the sacrificial observances by actually performing that very requisite, that good pleasure of Jehovah, which they were totally unable to accomplish." It may be manifest to you, sir, but I must own that I can perceive no such idea, either leading or subordinate, in the quotation, whether taken by itself, or considered in its connection. The Psalmist, gratefully recollecting the mercies of his God, desires to express his thankfulness not by sacrifice and offering, but in a much nobler manner, by delighting in the divine will and obeying the divine commands. The passage is applied to Christ in the New Testament; so are some other passages certainly not predictive. But that it was intended to be prophetical of him will admit of a doubt, when we consider the representation which the writer makes of his own moral character (ver. 12): "Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head." Very different from this is the gospel delineation of the pure and holy Jesus. Where, too, did you find that the "known and avowed intention" of the Levitical sacrifices was what "they were totally unable to accomplish"? Not in the passage (Levit. vi. 2-7) which you have quoted to show what that intention was; for there the contrary is expressly asserted: "The priest *shall make an atonement* for him before the Lord."

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* See 1 Samuel xv. 22; Psalm ii. 16-17; Proverbs xxi. 3; Isaiah i. 11-20; Hosea vi. 6; Amos v. 22-27; Micah vi. 6-8.

You then refer to Psalm cx. 4: "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedek." By what means a Jew could infer that the Messiah should be a sacrifice, or that his sufferings were prefigured in the ancient sacrifices, from his being described as a Priest and as a King, you have not told us, nor is it easy to conjecture. If any inference at all about sacrifices were to be deduced from such a passage, it would surely be, that as he was to be a Priest, he could not literally be a sacrifice.

In the quotation from Daniel ix. 24-27, the only clauses which bear upon the subject are, that seventy weeks should be accomplished—to make atonement for iniquity; and that the Messiah should be cut off, but not for himself. How does this prove that "the ancient sacrifices were originally designed as symbols, emblems, and representations" of the vicarious sufferings of the Messiah?

Our attention is next directed to the celebrated prophecy of Isaiah (liii.). This chapter furnishes no direct evidence of the assertion to support which it was introduced; and which was, not that Christ "would be a voluntary and expiatory sacrifice," but that he was thus prefigured in the Jewish sacrifices. These propositions are distinct and independent; nor are you justified in inferring the one from the other. That the death of the Messiah should be strictly and literally a sacrifice (supposing the prophet to have made such an assertion) by no means proves that the ancient sacrifices were designed representations of that event. It may be that in this chapter there are allusions to sacrificial rites, and that the sufferings of Christ are described in language borrowed from those ceremonies; but it does not follow that they were typical; the prophet does not assert that they were; he does not intimate that he, or his countrymen, understood them to be so. What support the doctrine of satisfaction may receive from the application of sacrificial language to the death of Christ will be considered in the next Letter. To that must be referred your citations from the New Testament; all of which, like the passage last quoted, however they may employ expressions connected with the rite of sacrificing, are silent as to its divine institution or original design.

Your hypothesis, that the ancient sacrifices were designed representations of the death of Christ, has, then, to struggle with the following difficulties: being vegetable as well as animal, it obviously was not the general principle on which they were founded; their origin is unrecorded, and consequently their design is incapable of direct proof; the patriarchs, who offered them acceptably, do not appear to have been conscious of any such reference; it is unsupported by the Levitical institutions; no mention of it occurs in the pious meditations of holy men of those ages; and when they are represented as comparatively worthless, it is uniformly in reference, not to a future and greater sacrifice, but to moral obedience.

Letter II.—On the Application of Sacrificial Language to the Death of Christ.

Dear Sir,—Unitarians consider the death of Christ as an important part of the divine plan for the redemption of mankind from sin and misery. "It was necessary that the Messiah should suffer."* His death perfected his lovely example; sealed the truth of the gracious doctrines which he taught; and was essential to his resurrection and exaltation, on which rest our hopes of immortality and bliss. Hence its tendency to purify the depraved and console the wretched. Hence we believe, equally with you, that he gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity; that his blood cleanseth from all sin; that by his stripes we are healed; that he hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God; and we unite with you in ascribing unto him that loved us, and has washed us from our sins in his own blood, and made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, glory and dominion for ever.† Such passages are beautiful descriptions of the moral influences of his death, and it is our desire to partake of the holy feelings which they so finely express.

It would have been passing strange if writers accustomed to the boldest figurative language, and educated in a religion of sacrifices, had not mentioned the death of Christ in terms borrowed from those ceremonies. If the Epistle to the Hebrews be excepted, the anonymous author of which professedly compares the Mosaic and Christian dispensations, a reader acquainted with the previous habits of the New-Testament writers will rather be surprised by the paucity than by the number of such allusions. They are rare compared with the number of passages in which the death of Christ is spoken of. Regarded as comparisons merely, they occur in about the proportion which might be expected; if it were strictly and properly a sacrifice, their infrequency is unaccountable.

Christ is described, by himself and others, under numerous and inconsistent images. He is a rock and a vine;

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* Luke xxiv. 46.

† Titus ii. 14; 1 John i. 7; 1 Pet. ii. 14, iii. 18; Rev. i. 5, 6.

a shepherd and a military leader; an altar and a priest; a lamb and a lion; a path and a door; life and an image; bread and a stone; a veil and the sun; a witness and a judge; a mercy-seat and the morning star. Is it surprising that he should also be a sacrifice?

The language on which so much stress is laid to prove the vicarious nature of Christ's sufferings is by no means so peculiar as is often represented. Similar expressions are common in the Scriptures on a variety of subjects. They are applied to priests: "God hath given it you *to bear the iniquity* of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the Lord" (Lev. x. 17). To pecuniary offerings: "They shall give every man a *ransom for his soul* unto the Lord—the rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less, than half a shekel, when they give an offering unto the Lord *to make an atonement* for your souls" (Exod. xxx. 11-15). To sacrifices, which are repeatedly said to accomplish what you assert they could never attain, *i.e.* make an atonement: "And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him" (Lev. i. 4). To acts of devotion: "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit" (Psalm li. 17). "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually" (Heb. xiii. 15: see also Psalm cvii. 22, cxvi. 17; Rom. xii. 1; 1 Pet. ii. 5). To deeds of charity: "Having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God" (Phil. iv. 18). "But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased" (Heb. xiii. 16). To persons: "And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord" (Isaiah lxvi. 20). "That the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Spirit" (Rom. xv. 16). "Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all" (Phil. ii. 17). "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand" (2 Tim. iv. 6). Add to these 1 Cor. iv. 13: "We are made as the filth of the world, we are the offscouring of all things unto this day." Paul here applies to himself and the other apostles the terms by which those unfortunate persons were distinguished who, in certain Greek colonies, were offered to the gods as expiatory sacrifices for the cities to which they belonged. Had Christ, instead of the apostles, been the subject of this comparison, the passage would have been regarded as no slight addition to the supposed proofs of the doctrine which you advocate. It would have been classed with similar texts concerning Christ, and we should have been told that "presumptuous and nugatory would it be to attempt any addition to the strength and clearness of these divine testimonies."

The sufferings of the apostles, and of some of the primitive disciples, are compared and classed with those of Christ: "Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptised with the baptism that I am baptised with" (Matt. xx. 23). "For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ" (1 Cor. i. 5). "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for his body's sake, which is the church" (Coloss. i. 24). "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death" (Phil. iii. 10). "But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings" (1 Pet. iv. 13). How little consistent are these passages with that absolute peculiarity which you attribute to the sufferings of Christ!

That the sacred writers mention the death of Christ in sacrificial terms, and assert it to be of great importance and efficacy, is readily allowed, and easily accounted for. Sacrifices were a common and favourite comparison for whatever in any respect resembled them. The death of Christ was a much stronger confirmation of the truth of his doctrines than could be that of any of his followers, as they only professed to have learnt the gospel of him, he to have received it immediately from God. As connected also with his resurrection, on which depend our expectations of a future state, his death becomes of incalculable moment. How simply and consistently will these considerations account for the language of the New Testament, without having recourse to the needless and strange supposition that his death was literally a sacrifice, and that he saved sinners by actually suffering their punishment, as a satisfaction to the justice of his Father!

In strict harmony with this view of the death of Christ is the importance attributed to his resurrection. "It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again" (Rom. viii. 34). "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain" (1 Cor. xv. 14). "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Pet. i. 3). "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom. x. 9). Not very easy is it to reconcile these declarations with your assertion, that to *his sufferings and death alone** the blessings of redemption are attributed in the New Testament. But the reply to that assertion has been well anticipated by Dr. Carpenter (*Unitarianism the Doctrine of the Gospel*, p. 349): "If the efficacy of the death of Christ be what is represented, it must have had that efficacy altogether independently of his doctrines and precepts. Now, though the death of Christ was one means of our redemption, and, in the circumstances of the case, a necessary means, yet it is never represented as the sole means, or even as of itself adequate to effect the end. On the contrary, as is well observed by H. Taylor, 'We are said to be saved by faith, by works, by the word of God, by baptism, by hope, by grace, by the death of Christ, by his life, by the words of St. Peter, by the words of St. Paul, by the foolishness of preaching, by calling on the name of the Lord, by enduring unto the end, &c.: by all these causes, singly, we are said to be saved in the New Testament; and yet it is most certain, that not one of them must be so understood as to exclude all the rest.' That we have redemption by Christ, through his blood, even the forgiveness of our offences, is the doctrine of the Scriptures; in other words, that Jesus was authorised to offer us forgiveness, and to assure us of the offered blessings gave up his life: but that his death, of itself, procured us forgiveness from God, that it rendered God propitious, averted the wrath of God, reconciled God to man, &c., I nowhere see in the New Testament, and therefore do not believe."

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* Page 73.

Letter III.—Propositions implied in the Doctrine of Satisfaction.

Dear Sir,—It is desirable when a doctrine is proposed for our acceptance, that we should be fully aware of the extent of the demand made upon our faith. By admitting the doctrine of Satisfaction* we pledge ourselves also to admit the consequences which may fairly be deduced from it, and the premisses upon which it rests. To inquire what those doctrines are which constitute its immediate support, and whether their pretensions to the character of sacred truths be plausible, is my present object. Their uncertainty, or untruth, must operate powerfully against the dogma with which they are essentially connected.

When we read that, "in virtue of the union constituted by the wisdom and grace of God between the Saviour and mankind, he voluntarily put himself in their place, and suffered as if he had been a transgressor, in order that they might be delivered from the guilt, or legal condemnation, of their sins" (p. 29), it is natural to inquire, *What law* was it to atone for our violation of which Christ suffered? and *what punishment* was it that he, in our stead, endured? Christ himself promulgated a moral code superior to all that the world had known before, and enforced by the awful sanctions of bliss and misery in a future state. It is not to be supposed, however, that he came to atone for future violations of a law which he was himself first to publish. We must search for some divine law of prior existence, and I know of but three: the law of nature; the law imposed on Adam; and that revealed by Moses. You certainly do not intend the first. The second consists merely of a prohibition and a threatening, which are thus recorded: "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. ii. 16, 17). The third law, that of Moses, comprises the ten commandments, various other moral precepts, and a ceremonial worship. Its sanctions, as recapitulated in Deuteronomy xxviii., are prosperity, health, and length of days; adversity, diseases, and death. It is needless to dwell upon the fact that this law, being only delivered to, and designed for, the Jews, could only be observed or violated by them; or that it was enforced only by temporal penalties and rewards; as your theory of sacrifices leads us to the earlier law, that given to Adam. But how would it surprise one who had read no theology but the Bible to be told, that of this law Christ for us fulfilled the command and bore the curse! Its fulfilment (if it be understood literally) consists in abstaining from the fruit of a certain tree which grew in the garden of Eden. As none since Adam have inhabited that garden, their obedience and disobedience have been alike impossible. But here a most marvellous commentary must be introduced. The injunction not to eat of a particular fruit was a covenant of works; "thou" meant not Adam only, but all his posterity; and by death is to be understood *endless life* in a state of misery! And this is an interpretation, not of those wicked Unitarians, who turn all scripture into figurative language, but of the Assembly of Divines, and of the King's-Head Society, who are set for the defence of the truth, and whose boast it is to uphold the plain, obvious meaning of the words of holy writ against all the perversions of heretics and infidels! If ever argument could decide a controversy, that on original sin should have been dismissed to final rest by the *Layman's Letters to Mr. Wilberforce.* That such a doctrine is still maintained must be owing, not to its scanty list of evidences, not to its innate beauty, for certainly it has "no form or comeliness that we should desire" it, but to its connection with the satisfaction of Christ. If it be not true that the positive injunction delivered to Adam was a moral law; if it be not true that he obeyed or disobeyed that law for all his posterity; if it be not true that death meant an eternal, miserable life,—then is it not true that Christ obeyed and suffered in our stead: for on these suppositions, strange and unfounded as they are, rests that doctrine.

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* As this term is employed in these Letters to designate the popular notion of salvation by the substituted sufferings and obedience of Christ, merely for the sake of conciseness, it is but fair to subjoin Dr. S.'s own explanation of it. "By satisfaction, in a theological sense, we mean such act or acts as shall accomplish all the moral purposes which to the infinite wisdom of God appear fit and necessary under a system of rectoral holiness, and which must otherwise have been accomplished by the exercise of retributive justice upon transgressors in their own persons" (p. 74).

Again, you take for granted the implacability of God. You say (p. 14), "the essential righteousness of Jehovah renders it *necessary and inevitable* that sin should be punished." What, sir, is the tendency of such a sentiment but to divest the divine character of its loveliest feature, mercy?—to rob the Monarch of the universe of the brightest jewel in his crown, the power of pardoning? Is God a creator, has he formed man liable to error, and may he not forgive his wanderings? Is he a father, yet forbidden to open his arms to a repentant child? Is he a governor, and may he not claim that sweet prerogative, the right of showing mercy, which every earthly prince enjoys?

> "Well, believe this:
> No ceremony that to great ones 'longs,
> Not the king's crown, nor the deputed sword,
> The marshal's truncheon, nor the judge's robe,
> Become them with one half so good a grace
> As mercy does."

Do poets know better how to celebrate a monarch than theologians to praise their God?

But if there be proof that we have imagined God to be more merciful, more lovely, than he really is, we must, however unwillingly, resign the pleasing vision. Where is that proof? In his character? No; for God is love. In analogy? No: whether we seek it in the government of families or states, it still presents a pardoning power. In the Old Testament? No; for under that dispensation, although it had more of terror than the Christian, if the wicked man turned from his evil ways he perished not. In the New Testament? No; for there Jesus has taught the free, unpurchased, unprompted mercy of God in the parable of the prodigal son.

Your views of the atonement appear to imply the doctrine of the Divinity of Christ: a doctrine which it will be difficult for me to believe while such texts as the following remain in the New Testament: "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father" (Mark xiii. 32). "To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him" (1 Cor. viii. 6). These are stubborn texts, sir, and will not bend to the

Trinitarian system. Commentators must treat them as Alexander did the Gordian knot. They defy every regular recipe for explaining obscurities and removing difficulties.

As a discussion on this subject came not within the limits of your sermon, neither does it within those of my remarks. You have given two observations upon it which deserve to be noticed. One is, that if Christ "performs the work which belongs to God alone, he must have the nature of God" (p. 46). It seems trifling for me to remind you that in what belongs to God alone he may yet employ the agency of his creatures; and that what in one sense is his work, in a subordinate sense is their work. If because God alone can save us, and Christ is our Saviour, Christ is God, with equal propriety may we affirm, that as God alone can work miracles, and Moses worked miracles, Moses is God; or that as God alone can predict future events, and Isaiah predicted future events, Isaiah is God.

The divinity of Christ has generally been attacked and defended by arguments drawn from the New Testament —the best way, it might be supposed, of discussing a doctrine of *Christianity*. You move to carry the cause into another court. You do not say that the New Testament is not sufficiently explicit on the subject to satisfy an inquiring mind, but you make an appeal to the Old Testament: "Since all Christians receive Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah whom the Jewish prophets predicted, it would seem a fair and unexceptionable method to collect all the characters and circumstances under which the Messiah was predicted, and to compose our description of him from the whole of this antecedent evidence" (p. 47). Desirable as it certainly is to have a luminous view of the predictions relative to the Messiah, I cannot agree with you as to its importance in this controversy. Whatever the prophets might have taught, the Jews, in our Lord's time, did not expect the Messiah to be an incarnation of the Deity. It is not possible that any men harbouring such a notion, and believing Jesus to be the promised Messiah, should have conversed with him in so easy and familiar a way as did the disciples. On the supposition, therefore, that the prophets did teach the divinity of the Messiah, there was as strong a necessity for its being clearly taught in the New Testament as if it were properly a new doctrine.*

Your system also supposes the transferable nature of guilt and innocence. "Jesus Christ voluntarily sustained the guilt and punishment of sin" (p. 28). "The active obedience of the Lord Christ is freely and graciously imputed to the pardoned sinner" (p. 56). These assertions are opposed alike to reason and to scripture. In no place is Christ called guilty, nor are his sufferings ever termed a punishment. Nowhere is it said that the righteousness of Christ becomes the righteousness of those who believe in him. How can it possibly be indifferent to a lawgiver whether the transgressor suffer in his own person or by a substitute? The desire of an innocent person to stand in the place of a guilty one does not make him deserving of punishment, nor can his suffering answer the object of punishment, whether we suppose that object to be the reformation of the individual or the well-being of society.

Such, sir, are the pillars which support your temple of truth. If they totter, the whole fabric is in danger; and in their fall the doctrine of satisfaction is necessarily involved. The object of this letter has been rather to indicate than to attack them. It is designed for those, and I know there are many, who are sceptical on these doctrines, or even disbelieve them, and yet hold that of atonement, and rank with modern and moderate Calvinists. You will agree with me in considering it as a strange inconsistency to doubt or deny these, while that is regarded as indisputable. You will agree with me in the propriety of displaying the inseparable connection of the different parts of the Calvinistic system; although our views may differ as to the probable result of making those who swell the numbers of your societies and congregations fully aware of the extent and firmness of that connection.

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* If the able author of the *Calm Inquiry into the Scripture Doctrine concerning the Person of Christ* had extended his plan so as to include those passages of the Old Testament which are supposed to favour the divinity of the Messiah, Unitarians might have closed their pleadings, and rested the merits of their cause solely on his performance. Until that impartial and masterly work has been refuted (no easy task!), Trinitarians act very wisely in appealing from the New to the Old Testament.

LETTER IV.—INCONSISTENCIES CONNECTED WITH THE DOCTRINE OF SATISFACTION.

DEAR SIR,—A house divided against itself cannot stand, nor can a system of doctrines. If it can be shown that yours is inconsistent with itself, it will at least prove that a part of it must be relinquished; it will prove that, considered as a whole, it is not the system of divine revelation.

The first contradiction which offers itself to notice is that, on your system, God *pardons* and *punishes* the *very same offence*. Christ has borne the guilt and punishment of believers, and yet they are said to be forgiven. A debt is only once payable; a crime only once punishable. Let the principle of substitution be admitted; still the sinner cannot be required to suffer both in his surety and in his own person. If another for him has discharged the debt, sustained the curse, he needs not implore his deliverance of the mercy of God, but may demand it from his justice. When a man tells me that God has forgiven his sins, and in the same breath, that Christ endured, in his stead, the punishment of those sins, he makes two assertions, either of which may perhaps be correct, but which cannot both be true.

Calvinistic notions are frequently, but very improperly, called doctrines of grace. True, they assert that man is saved wholly by grace; but if any proposition can be directly opposed to this, it is the following: "That sin should be punished according to its desert, the supremacy, holiness, justice, and veracity of the Most High absolutely require" (p. 37). In strict consistency with this latter assertion, every divine favour is represented as procured or purchased by the obedience, sufferings, and intercession of Christ. That is, we are saved by the grace, the free grace, of God, and yet that grace itself is purchased!

To soften this representation we are reminded that Christ was the gift of God. "The Father of mercies hath himself provided this Lamb for a sacrifice. So unjust is the calumny often cast upon our doctrine of atonement; as if we represented the benevolence of the Son to be superior to that of the Father" (p. 48). And a gross calumny it certainly would be, were this a complete statement of your doctrine; but when we find that "the glorious person who undertook this great work of redemption was perfectly *independent*" (p. 40), it appears a calumny no longer. How can Jesus be the gift of the Father, if he be equal with the Father? If Christ be strictly independent, he may be said to give himself, but cannot be called the gift of any other being or person whatever.

It is strange that after reprobating this *calumny*, you could so soon pen such a passage as the following:—"Such intercourse of the soul with God is the essential and principal instrument of maintaining the spiritual life. Yet this happy intercourse is impossible, except by a sincere dependence upon the sacrifice of Christ. By him alone, the Way, the Truth, and the Life, can we approach the Father. *The blood of sprinkling is the only protection that will avail us before the Judge of all*" (p. 62). Can there be any comparison in benevolence between him who shed his blood for us, and him from whom such a sacrifice is necessary to protect us?

Your notion of the complexity of Christ's person produces a curious complexity of moral character, the consistency of which it is not easy to discover. As God he must, equally with the Father, require an atoning sacrifice to satisfy his justice, and procure from him any grace for sinners. As mediator he freely offers this sacrifice, which included the purchase of every thing necessary for their salvation. As God he can bestow nothing freely. As mediator he freely gives every thing. He is, at the same time, stern and gracious, placable and implacable. This must, I suppose, be explained in the same way as the equally mysterious fact, that as God he knew, but as Christ he did not know, the day of judgment; as God he was independent, and as Christ he could of himself do nothing; as God he heard and answered prayer, while as Christ he offered it.

The following passages in your sermon appear to me to be contradictory: "The union of the divine and human natures in his person was constant and invariable" (p. 53). "There appear to have been seasons in the hour of his deepest extremity, in which he endured the entire absence of divine joy and every kind of comfort or sensible support. What but a total eclipse of the sun of consolation could have wrung from him that exceedingly bitter and piercing cry, 'My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me'?" (p. 34). How could God endure the absence of divine joy? or the sun of consolation be to itself eclipsed? There is, sir, in your sermon, and in the writings of most modern Calvinists, a constant struggle between the doctrines of Christ's divinity and the impassibility of Deity. That God cannot suffer, and that Christ, who was God, suffered and died, are assertions which those who have not studied metaphysical theology never think capable of being reconciled. The uneducated part of Calvinistic congregations, and they are no small proportion, generally believe in a suffering Deity. The idea is too often confirmed and endeared to them by the language of many of their teachers, and by such passages as the following in their devotional forms:

"Well might the sun in darkness hide,
  And shut his glories in,
When God the mighty maker died
  For man the creature's sin."—WATTS.

It is readily admitted that you hold both the above-mentioned doctrines, and that you firmly believe their consistency. What, then, but the inveterate inconsistency of your system could have prompted such expressions as the following?—"The Saviour" (a term which, in your view, implies Deity) "came to suffer. The chief part of his humiliation was his submission to *death*, even the death of the cross" (p. 31). "How great beyond expression was the condescension of the eternal Son of God, assuming our nature, bearing our griefs and sorrows, the penal consequences of our sins, and yielding up his own invaluable life under agonies unspeakable, that he might redeem us from all iniquity!" (p. 36.) 'Tis true you have elsewhere told us, that "In those respects in which the sacrifice of the Messiah implied suffering, it could attach only to his human nature. The Divinity is not susceptible of pain or death. Inconsiderate language, seeming to imply the contrary to this, has done much harm to the cause of scriptural truth" (p. 49). And this explanation may preserve you from the charge of inconsistency, when you only speak of the sufferings of Christ in general terms; but will it apply to the passages just quoted? Have you not expressly told us, that "the eternal Son of God" yielded up his invaluable life? Does this magnificent phraseology mean nothing more than that "the eternal Son of God" united himself to a man, which man suffered death? If this be all, then is such language "inconsiderate" and pernicious; if more be meant, then must you abandon either the notion of the impassibility of Deity or that of the proper divinity of Christ.

You have attempted (p. 54) to distinguish between the actions of Christ which are to be attributed to his human nature, and those which belong to his divine nature. To the former you assign all acts that were physical, or merely intellectual; to the latter all moral acts, and all the moral qualities of complex acts. This is perhaps as good a distribution as could be made, but it only serves to show the universal confusion introduced by your opinions into scripture history and language. According to your sentiments, Christ wrought miracles by his own power. Many miracles are merely physical acts, therefore these were wrought by him as man. Prayer is a moral act. Submission to the divine will, and dependence upon the divine power, are moral acts. Therefore, when Christ prayed; when he said, "I can of mine own self do nothing;" or when, contemplating the swift approach of his hour of suffering, he exclaimed, "Father, if it be thy will, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done," we are to believe that it was the Deity who spake!

You have laboured hard to show that, although when Christ, who was God, suffered, God, who was Christ, did not suffer, yet the Divinity was not unconnected with those sufferings. What is the result of your exertions? That although only the human nature of the Messiah could suffer, yet that "all the acts and sufferings of that human nature, by reason of its union with the divine, come under a *relative consideration* very different from that which similar acts and sufferings could have in any mere man" (p. 50). This union between the divine and human natures either was such as to preserve to each its separate consciousness,—in which case it was the same in kind, though superior in degree, to that which the prophets possessed,—or it must have given them but one individual consciousness; and if so, the Deity suffered. On the latter supposition your "relative consideration" will not apply; on the former, it will not be peculiar to Christ.

Christ, it is allowed, was "a real and proper man." Without discussing the possibility of such a union between natures essentially and infinitely different as are the divine and human as to form *one person*, it may still be inquired whether the person thus constituted would be properly a man. That which is produced by the union of two substances possesses qualities, and bears a name, distinct from either. Water is not hydrogen, nor is it oxygen. On the hypothesis that mind is a spiritual substance, it is not proper to say that man is spirit, or that he is matter. We can no more call a being whose nature is a union of the divine and human a man, than we can call water a gas; brass, copper; a book, ink; or the world, a metal. A God-man would be a production *sui generis*. He would have little more in common with us than the human form. The circumstances which distinguish ours from superior natures are as essential characteristics as those which separate it from inferior natures. The latter he might, the former he could not, possess. It is as necessary to the constitution of a human person that he should not have infinite knowledge as that he should have rational powers. He who has the first is God; he who has not the latter may be a brute; neither can be properly a man. If Christ were God, he could not be properly a man. If he were not man, he could not, on your own principles, make satisfaction to divine justice for the sins of men.

There is much confusion in your account of the nature of Christ's sufferings. You represent them as principally mental. "Excruciating were the pains inflicted on his bodily frame, which was probably delicate and susceptible to a very high degree. But all these were light compared with the distress of his holy soul" (p. 32). You also strongly protest against a statement which I have sometimes heard from Calvinistic pulpits, that his sufferings were similar to those of a conscious sinner. Whence, then, in your opinion, were they? From the immediate infliction of God: his "righteous Father was pleased to crush him with that dreadful and fatal stroke" (p. 32). His "was the hand that smote him" (p. 33). "The tremendous effects of God's manifested displeasure against sin he endured, though in him was no sin: and these he endured in a manner of which even those unhappy spirits who shall drink the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God will never be able to form an adequate idea"! (p. 34.) And yet the Father "still ceased not to delight in the Son of his love" (p. 32). And yet "the union of the divine and human natures in his person was constant and invariable"! Was the Son the object, at the same moment, of the Father's approbation and disapprobation, complacency and anger? Was the displeasure only apparent, the love real? If so, must not the Son, by his perfect knowledge of the Father's delight in him, have been rendered incapable of suffering from those appearances which would, to us, have been indications of the divine indignation?

The question "whether we are to regard the sacrifice of the Redeemer as offered generally on the behalf of mankind, or exclusively for those who shall in the event be saved by him," you decline discussing, on the ground of its being unimportant, and not solved in the divine oracles. Is it not strange, if the doctrine of satisfaction be true, that such a question should not be solved in the scriptures? If it be important for us to know that Christ was a sacrifice, it cannot be wholly vain to inquire for whom he offered himself. There are but two ways in which this question can be answered. He atoned for the sins of a part, or of the whole of mankind. If he suffered only for a part, how can you be justified in calling upon all to accept the mercy which he purchased? On this supposition, there are numbers for whom there is no such mercy as you offer,—whom God never designed, nor Christ ever died, to save. If Christ "sustained the guilt and punishment" of all, by what law can any be condemned? By what right can the Judge of all punish those whose iniquities have been already borne by their representative? Well might you say, "This subject appears to me to involve great difficulties on both sides" (p. 58); and yet one side or other is advocated by most believers in the proper sacrifice of Christ; the silence of scripture would of itself be a difficulty; and whether the question be solved or not, it will admit of a solution, and whatever that solution be, it involves your system in contradiction.

A judgment to come is universally anticipated by Christians. The New Testament uniformly assures us that we shall be judged according to our works. What truth can there be in such a declaration, if the world be already under the condemnatory sentence of Jehovah, and deliverance from that be the result of a divine decree, or an atoning sacrifice, altogether irrespective of the good works of those whom it saves? If our being descendants from Adam be a sufficient ground of condemnation, if the sacrifice of Christ be the sole cause of our salvation, for what purpose can an inquiry into character be instituted? A Calvinist's hope in prospect of the day of judgment rests solely upon the sacrifice of Christ: if such was the reliance of the apostles, how strange that it should not once appear in their numerous references to that day! How strange that Christ himself should so entirely have omitted it in his minute detail of the transactions of that solemn time in the 25th chapter of Matthew!

These, sir, are not obscurities, but contradictions; not mysteries, but absurdities. You have defined a mystery: "It is truth seen in disunited portions; but though the intermediate parts be hid in a wise or necessary darkness, their continuity, in the perfection of divine harmony, is not the less certain" (p. 52). The objections which have been urged against your system bear chiefly, not upon those parts which are "to us unsearchable or dimly seen," but upon those which are obvious. The argument against it is, not that its harmony cannot be clearly traced, but that its internal discordancy is apparent. Your aim was, "to guard the truth from the assaults of its adversaries, and to show the solidity of its base, and the symmetry of its parts" (p. 51). In doing this, you have claimed for some portion the protection of mysterious darkness: let that portion be what it may, my aim has been to show, that in what you have exposed to the light there is neither symmetry nor solidity. Propositions of which we cannot perceive the connection may yet be true; but for those of which we can perceive the contrariety, to be all true is impossible. Scriptural truth is "a building fitly framed together;" its parts valuable in themselves, and acquiring strength and beauty by their harmonious union. Calvinism is a Nebuchadnezzar's image, where richest and vilest materials are blended together to form a discordant and monstrous whole.

LETTER V.—SCRIPTURAL EVIDENCE FOR THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION BY THE FREE GRACE OF GOD.

DEAR SIR,—With pleasure I turn from attacking error to establishing truth. Hitherto my task has been like that of exploring the gloom and darkness of a dungeon; now it is to mark the glorious light, and breathe the free air of heaven. If I understand the scriptures rightly, they teach that God is ever ready, on sincere repentance, to forgive sinners. I use the term repentance in its genuine import of a change of mind. You have taught that God can extend mercy only in consequence of the death of Christ. "The guilt of sin, so long as it remains, must ever separate the guilty soul from God. Nor could any repentance, prayers, or satisfactions, of human devising, ever remove the dreadful barrier. But now this otherwise insuperable obstacle is removed, in a manner glorious to the justice and government of God, on the behalf of all who believe in Christ and obey him" (p. 56). To this assertion I oppose the fact that God is repeatedly represented as showing mercy, on repentance, without any reference to the sacrifice of Christ. The Old and New Testaments concur in showing that his grace to penitents is completely free and unconditional.

When God proclaimed his name to Moses as "the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin,"* he made no reference whatever to what you regard as the only way in which he can, consistently with his character, exercise those lovely qualities: no hint is given of an obstacle insuperable but by the death of the Messiah, nor could Moses understand that there was any such obstacle; for afterwards, when the Israelites had transgressed, he supplicated the divine forgiveness, without adverting to any condition, or making any other plea than the character and glory of God. "Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people, according unto the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people from Egypt even until now. And the Lord said, I have pardoned according to thy word" (Numbers xiv. 19, 20).

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* Exod. xxxiv. 6.

To the Jewish people, while calamities were threatened for disobedience, restoration was solemnly promised on repentance. "And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee, and shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart and with all thy soul; that then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee" (Deut. xxx. 1-3).

The history of the Jews is a history of transgressions and judgments, of penitence and forgiveness. It always was that "when they in their trouble did turn unto the Lord God of Israel, and sought him, he was found of them."*

David sought forgiveness of his sins solely from the mercy of God: "Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies and thy loving-kindnesses; for they have been ever of old. Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to thy mercy remember thou me, for thy goodness' sake, O Lord. For thy name's sake, Lord, pardon mine iniquity. Have mercy upon me, O Lord, according to thy loving-kindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Oh, remember not against us former iniquities; let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us: for we are brought very low. Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name; and deliver us, and purge away our sins, for thy name's sake."†

The prophets bear the same testimony. "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come, now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. Let the wicked man forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. Again, when I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die: if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right; if the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life without committing iniquity, he shall surely live, he shall not die."*

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* 2 Chron. xv. 4.

† Psalm xxv. 6, 7, 11; li. 1; lxxix. 8, 9.

The God of the Old Testament was, then, a God who forgave freely. Is the God of the New Testament less benevolent? Is the JEHOVAH of the Patriarchs a more mild and gracious being than the FATHER of Jesus and of the Apostles? Is it possible that, in the superior light of Christianity, the divine character should appear less amiable and benignant than in the Mosaic dispensation? No, sir; the gospel casts no shade upon the love of God, but adds fresh lustre to its ancient glory. We appeal to the preaching of the Son of God. He taught the forgiveness of sins; whether by a purchased grace, or from the spontaneous mercy of our heavenly Father, let the following passages decide:

"If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matt. vi. 14-15). "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven" (Luke vi. 36-37). The doctrine of free forgiveness is expressly taught and illustrated in the parables of the sovereign to whom his servants were indebted (Matt. xviii. 21-35); of the generous creditor (Luke vii. 41, 42); and of the prodigal son (Luke xv. 11-32). Is it conceivable that Jesus, the best of teachers, the light of men, who was born and came into the world to "bear witness unto the truth,"† should not, on this important subject, have declared the *whole* counsel of God? In the above-mentioned parables, he explicitly and largely treats of the doctrine of forgiveness, without adverting to any other condition than sincere repentance. Hence, we may safely infer that, in his view, repentance was the only essential condition.

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* Isaiah i. 16-18, lv. 6, 7; Ezekiel xxxiii. 14-16.
† John xviii. 37.

To confirm this inference it may be remarked, that as he taught forgiveness without asserting his own death to be the means of procuring it, so he spake of his death without representing it as designed to satisfy divine justice for the sins of men. In upwards of twenty passages in the gospels we find him predicting his sufferings and death, but never in this view.* How is this silence, on your principles so very mysterious, to be accounted for? How is the obvious inference from this double omission to be evaded?

You rest your hope of acceptance with the Judge of all solely upon the sacrifice of Christ. In your view, then, it must be awfully dangerous to represent, without qualification, our repentance and obedience as the ground of our final acceptance. Yet this has Christ repeatedly done. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me: inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the grave shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation."*

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* Once, indeed, it is called a *ransom:* but he ransomed us, not from the power of God, but from the dominion of sin.

In the preaching and writings of the apostles we meet with the same connection between repentance and forgiveness, obedience and happiness. "Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out. Repent, therefore, of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him. Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men,—wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden. And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance. The world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life."†

The following argument appears to me of some weight: "There can be nothing more plain, than that mankind, in this world, are placed in a state of discipline, in which it is intended that, from the first beginnings and rudiments of virtue, they should make progress towards a state of maturity and perfection, daily correcting what hath been amiss, growing in good affections, and advancing in holiness. Now, in such a state the forgiveness of faults and follies, upon repentance and reformation, seemeth to be really essential to the design of that state, an essential part of it rather, and to follow it as naturally as light and shadows go together. If there be no forgiveness, it is in vain to speak of discipline in creatures morally imperfect."*

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* Matt. vii. 21, 24, 25, xiii. 43, xix. 17, xxv. 34-36, 40; John v. 28-29.

† Acts iii. 19, viii. 22, x. 34, 35, xi. 18, xxvi. 18; Rom. xiv. 17, 18; 2 Cor. v. 9, 10; Gal. vi. 4, 5; Col. iii. 23, 24; 1 John ii. 17; Rev. xxii. 14.

It will be allowed that the salvation of man is the work of God. For this principle, indeed, Calvinists profess earnestly to contend. That he should forgive us freely accords well with it; but not so consistent with it is the notion that he could not save us without taking into union with the divine nature a human being to work out our salvation.

That we are saved by grace is a scripture principle. This is virtually denied by those, if such there are, who expect that future bliss will be bestowed as the merited reward of our obedience. Is it not equally denied by those who maintain that heaven is merited for us by the obedience of Christ? In either case the reward is "not of grace, but of debt."† If the principle of substitution be admitted, the one supposition as effectually excludes the operation of grace as the other. Both represent as due from the justice of God what the scripture assures us must flow from his mercy.

The divine mission, the perfect obedience, the sufferings, death, and resurrection of Jesus, are uniformly represented in scripture as intended to influence not God, but man. In us were the obstacles to reconciliation, and upon us were designed to operate the means for their removal. God was always ready to forgive; the end of revelation is to induce man to repent, that he may be forgiven. The reconciliation of man to God was the object of the apostolic ministry;‡ but the reconciliation of God to man is unscriptural both in phraseology and in sentiment.

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* Duchal on the Atonement, *Theol. Repos.* vol. ii.

† Romans iv. 3.

‡ See 2 Cor. v. 18-20; Eph. ii. 16, v. 25; Col. i. 21; 1 Pet. iii. 18.

Dr. Magee (*Discourses on Atonement and Sacrifice*, vol. i. p. 190) has put forth his critical strength to disprove the natural and obvious

Let the candid inquirer now decide whether it be the doctrine of the New Testament, that Christ died to remove an "otherwise insuperable obstacle" on the part of God to the forgiveness of sinful man.

LETTER VI.—COMPARISON AS TO MORAL TENDENCY OF THE DOCTRINES OF SATISFACTION AND OF FREE GRACE.

DEAR SIR,—The great end of preaching is to make men better, and such subjects should certainly be selected as have the most direct and powerful tendency to this desirable object. Speaking of the doctrine of atonement, you say (p. 62): "This is the principal topic on which the preaching of Christianity should dwell. Like the sun in the heavens, it is the fountain of the light and life of religion, the energy, the fervour, and the joy of the Christian character." That it is not the exclusive source of devotion and morality is, however, conceded by your fellow-labourer, Dr. Magee, in his Remarks on a publication of Mr. Belsham's. "I am most willing to admit, that no

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interpretation of these passages. He has discovered that the word rendered "be reconciled" has the "force of the reciprocal Hithpahel among the Hebrews," and implies "to *reconcile one's self* to another, that is" (how convenient is *that is*, for covertly substituting one idea for another!) "that is, to *appease*, or *obtain the favour of*, that other." This opinion is curiously supported by the authority of two critics, one of whom contends that this sense of the word is peculiar to the New Testament, and the other that it is common among writers purely Greek. Matthew v. 24 is appealed to as deciding the question. Dr. M. thinks he has here our Saviour's authority for his notion, that *our reconciliation to another* means, in Scripture, the *reconciliation of that other to us*. But can any thing in that passage be more clear than that the obstacles to reconciliation were in him who was about to offer his sacrifice? If they were in him to whom he was to be reconciled, our Lord's injunction went to prohibit, in case of the other's obstinacy, his sacrificing at all, though he had ever so sincerely desired reconciliation, and made ever so earnest and frequent attempts to accomplish it. Is it to be supposed that Jesus would exclude a man from the services of religion because that man had an enemy whom he had attempted by every proper means, but in vain, to conciliate? That interpretation cannot be worth much which rests upon the supposition of our Lord's delivering so absurd and cruel an injunction.

person has a right to deny to Mr. B. the appellation of a 'moral teacher.' To this he is fully entitled, as having a firm belief in the existence and general providence of God; and as inculcating principles that tend to beget love and gratitude to that Being, and to produce a corresponding benignity of affection to our fellow-creatures, impressing the duties of benevolence and social kindness to man, as I make not the smallest question he truly feels them." That a belief in the doctrine of satisfaction is not the only source of religious feeling may be proved by a reference to those specimens of simple, pure, and elevated devotion which are to be found in the writings of many Unitarians, both dead and living. Even the piety of those who are called orthodox frequently soars to its sublimest heights when unincumbered by their peculiar doctrines. Many of the finest passages in such writers as Taylor, Barrow, Howe, and Baxter, are of this description. The Book of Psalms, the only book of scripture entirely dedicated to devotional subjects, is an eternal demonstration that, without the aid of what you call the "only means" of preserving the heart pure and happy, and the life holy, every sacred emotion of penitence for sin, joy in forgiveness, resignation in calamity, delight in the revealed will of God, love to his character, and submission to his commands, may be produced. These feelings are expressed without any reference to such doctrines as moral imputation or vicarious suffering. David, therefore, did not believe those doctrines; or, if he did, they were not the fountain of the light and life of *his* religion, the energy, the fervour, and the joy of *his* character. The man after God's own heart, when he bequeathed to posterity the transcript of his feelings, the record of his hopes and fears, his desires and aversions, his joys and sorrows, would not have omitted what appeared to him the only means of making us pure and happy.

But although the efficiency of Unitarian sentiments to produce the purest devotion and benevolence is thus ascertained from the writings both of their advocates and of their opponents, and, above all, by that book which they unite in venerating, it is still possible that your doctrines may produce a peculiar and perhaps important modification of those feelings. Whether this be the fact, and, if so, what is the character of that modification, we shall now inquire.

Does the doctrine of satisfaction enhance the love of God? It must be allowed that it does; if, as you represent, it displays, in a peculiar and advantageous light, the holiness, justice, legislative authority, wisdom, and mercy of the Deity. I shall follow you through these particulars. You say that, "If it had been possible that sin should be pardoned, and its guilt cancelled, by an act of mere power, it might have been doubted whether the Almighty were indeed infinite in moral rectitude: it might have been surmised that sin was not so extremely odious in his sight as his word represents, nor holiness so absolutely necessary to the happiness of a rational being" (p. 24). 'Tis true, it might have been so doubted and surmised; but such doubts and surmises would have had no rational foundation. If sin be only pardoned on condition of its being abandoned, we have surely the best reason to believe it to be inconsistent with the divine will and with our happiness. Its guilt is on your system, rather than on ours, "cancelled by an act of mere power;" for such an act is the transfer of criminality and punishment from transgressors to a righteous person. You speak of "Jehovah's abhorrence" of sin. If, by this expression, you mean his abhorrence of the sinner (which is the most intelligible supposition, as sin and the sinner, an act and the agent, can have no separate existence), your system, after all, does not display it; for the sinner escapes, while his innocent substitute is punished. If you intend to personify sin as the object of divine abhorrence, that abhorrence were best displayed in the destruction of sin. That event you expect not. But which, sir, is more consistent with the divine holiness, which more gloriously displays it? the eternal preservation of sin and misery, or the universal effusion of that holiness upon rational creatures?

Of justice your system displays little else than the violation. The human race are made responsible for the transgression of Adam, to which they were not parties; and Christ is punished for the sins of men, in which he had no share. The guilt of the first offence is transferred from Adam to us, and from us to Christ; and thus, at length, one suffers who only deserves punishment in consequence of the imputation of an imputation of a crime. Thus intricate and objectionable is your attempt to solve the difficulty which, as you imagine, divine justice presents to the salvation of sinners. But is this difficulty real or imaginary? If justice require that penitents should not be treated like innocent persons, does it not also require that they should not be dealt with as obstinate offenders? And, above all, does it not forbid that the innocent should suffer for the guilty? Can justice change the law which it professes to administer? The laws of God are accompanied with many a gracious clause in favour of those who turn from the evil of their ways. The sword of justice can never divide these from the sacred volume, or interpose between the repentant sinner and the mercy which they promise him.

It does not appear to me that "the legislative authority of God is brought to view in its rightful honours" by your system more than by that which you oppose. The dignity of a Ruler is not compromised by the exercise of mercy. If forgiveness be productive of future obedience, it is more honourable both to the law and to the lawgiver to extend pardon than to inflict punishment. It is as essential to the authority and dignity of a Sovereign to be able to pardon as to punish. Mercy, as well as justice, must belong to a being of infinite excellence. The Ruler of the universe must be free to exercise both as his wisdom may prescribe. If his commands had not been accompanied with declarations of mercy to penitent offenders, he would still, as sole Legislator, have been free to remit punishment, or to lighten it. Free forgiveness would, even on that supposition, have been no more inconsistent with his legislative authority than the expedient of punishing by substitution: and it has the advantage of being far more consistent with his moral character; for it displays, what the other excludes, the glorious attribute of mercy, the brightest ornament of human governors, and the loveliest attribute of the universal Sovereign.

To your assertion, that the doctrine of satisfaction displays "the glory of eternal wisdom," the whole of this letter may be considered as a reply. If my design be accomplished of showing that it neither exhibits in a favourable view the character of God, nor adds to our stock of virtuous motives and enjoyments, it will follow that the seal of divine wisdom, or even of human sagacity, is not impressed upon it.

With great consistency, the attribute of mercy comes last under your consideration. To say any thing upon this subject you are obliged to advert to the fact that God gave his Son; a fact which, as has been already observed, subverts your whole system of atonement, which rests upon the complete independency of the Son. The mercy of the Father is reduced to the single act of giving the Son to satisfy the claims of justice, and the nature of the Son is so represented as to render it impossible that he should be the gift of the Father. And thus is that mercy, with the praises of which the scriptures are filled, jostled out of modern theology.

Let us now contemplate a different picture of the divine character. God is love. He is the Father of all his creatures. He wills the holiness of man as the only means of insuring his happiness. Sincere obedience he always accepts; and, on sincere repentance, he is ever ready to forgive. By the ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus, he has confirmed to sinners and mortals the hope of forgiveness and immortality. But these, and all his favours, through whatever channel they flow, are alike unpurchased and undeserved, and proceed from his own spontaneous and boundless love. Is not such a Being more amiable, more worthy of supreme affection, and better fitted to excite it, than the stern and relentless Deity of Calvinism? This conception of his character is one which must be ever welcome to the mind; which will fill the heart with a thousand generous feelings of gratitude, esteem, and love; which must inspire with the noblest motives to avoid iniquity and practise righteousness; which spreads joy and bliss over the whole face of creation; and which supports the soul, in the prospect of affliction or death, by the animating assurance that, through whatever changes we pass, and into whatever spheres of existence we may be removed, we shall still be encompassed by the arms of an omnipotent Parent.

The apostles ascribe to the death of Christ an important moral influence. His blood "cleanseth from all sin."* We glory in his cross as displaying a bright assemblage of inducements to holy obedience. There he terminated his labours for the good of man, and completed his claims on our gratitude and love. There he displayed an unparalleled specimen of submission to God, forgiveness to his enemies, and good-will to all mankind. There he sealed the truth of those messages of grace which he had previously published; and, dying but to rise again, he placed on the firmest basis that powerful motive to a virtuous life, the hope of immortality. These considerations afford a fair explanation of the glowing language of the sacred writers on the death of Christ; and we may safely lay them in the balance against that influence which the doctrine of satisfaction is supposed to possess over those who believe it. That influence is chiefly ascribed to the display which a vicarious sacrifice is thought to make of the evil of sin. But can that evil be more strongly impressed upon the mind than by the belief that, while we practise it, we must not hope for the divine forgiveness, and cannot enjoy real happiness?

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* 1 John i. 7.

The doctrine of satisfaction has a tendency to enfeeble some of those motives to holiness which the apostles were accustomed to enforce on the consciences of their hearers. Love to God is not only a duty in itself, and indeed the first of duties, but it impels to the discharge of every other duty. So far as the opinion under consideration interferes with love to God, it tends to its diminution rather than its increase. Obedience is also inculcated from the example of Christ. We are exhorted to copy his humility, purity, patience, and benevolence. The exhortation has propriety and force, if we believe him to have been "in all things like unto his brethren."* His triumphs over temptation may then encourage us to resist, in hope of similar success. Not so, if he were, as the doctrine of satisfaction implies and requires, a God-man. His moral victories, on that supposition, lose both their merit and their influence. His possession of the divine nature would render him incapable of being "tempted in all points like as we are;"† and make the scripture applications of his example as improper as if we had been directed to emulate the swiftness of the horse or the lofty flight of the eagle.

Christ and his apostles announced a judgment to come. They represent the righteous and the wicked as receiving proportional rewards and punishments. A powerful appeal is thus made to our hopes and fears. Every action is connected with our future destiny. How little of this motive, so frequently urged in the New Testament, can be felt by those who expect to be justified by an imputed righteousness, which will clothe alike with infinite merit him who spends his whole life in the service of God, and him who is converted but in the agonies of death!

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* Heb. ii. 17.

† Heb. iv. 15.

Unitarianism, sir, is a cheerful and enlivening doctrine. Its peculiar representations of the character of God and the ultimate destiny of man are eminently fitted to inspire satisfaction and delight. We look around us with complacency; we look forward with blissful anticipation; for we trace the operations of that Omnipotent Love from which all things originated, and which will consummate its work by establishing the universal and eternal reign of virtue and happiness. With you the doctrine of satisfaction is the source of Christian joy. But what pleasure can that notion afford to a benevolent mind? Will it teach him to rejoice in a God who knows not how to pardon, and who, but for the interposition of his Son, would have been ever unmoved by the groans of misery, the sighs and prayers of penitence?—in a world under the wrath and curse of God, and whose inhabitants are born under a law which they cannot fulfil, and to an infinitely wretched destiny which they cannot avoid?—or in a salvation, purchased by innocent blood, designed for only a part, probably a small part, of mankind, and which leaves millions not more sinful than himself in a state of remediless ruin? If there be those who can derive pleasure from such considerations, I envy not their selfish and degrading joy.

A Calvinist, to be happy, must steel his heart against those benevolent and sympathetic feelings which God and nature have implanted in our constitution. He must rejoice in prospect of a bliss which it is probable many, deservedly dear to him, will never share. To the sacred claims of friendship, kindred, and domestic love, he must be insensible, or in many cases those valuable connections will to him be sources of misery. What a heart must that man possess who can kindle into rapture at the anticipation of a joy from which his faithful friend, his father, child, or brother, or the wife of his bosom, may be eternally excluded! who even hopes to be reconciled to their perdition, and to rejoice in it, as demonstrating the glory of his God! Father of mercies, if this be thy will, at least hide from our view the page that unfolds such horrors; take back the fatal gift of revelation; and let us again rejoice in the sweet though delusive hope of nature and of reason, that those over whose ashes we mourn will be one day purged from their failings by a future discipline, and unite with us in grateful adoration at thy footstool, in the regions of eternal peace and bliss!

Letter VII.—Miscellaneous Observations.

Dear Sir,—The goodness of a cause, I am well aware, is altogether unconnected with the manner in which that cause is advocated. The best principles sometimes are disgraced by injudicious defenders. Yet when a system is generally supported in an objectionable mode, we can hardly help feeling some suspicion that the fault is not altogether in its friends, but attaches to the system itself. This suspicion I could not repress on finding that your sermon was tinctured with the prevalent faults of Calvinistic disputants. Those who know your general fairness and candour as a critic will be apt, from this fact, to conclude that a defence of your notions absolutely requires a deviation from the established laws of literary warfare. If this be not the case, why, in what ought to be a calm discussion of evidence, do we generally meet with vehement appeals to the passions? The business of an advocate for the doctrine of atonement is not to fulminate vengeance on those who deny it, but to prove its truth by argument. He should remember that there is a wide difference between rejecting an offer and not believing that such an offer has been made. This distinction you seem to have lost sight of in the following passage: "If still this method of grace be rejected, the condition of sinful man assumes a fearful form. Either the actual offender must undertake to meet the punitive justice of heaven, or he must suspend his soul on the expectation that no such justice will be found to exist. Miserable alternative! either that the denounced wrath of God is a trifle, or that his denunciations themselves are swelling words of vanity" (p. 40). We have nothing to do with your alternative. We believe in the doctrine of salvation by grace as revealed in the scriptures. They are the denunciations of man, and not of God, that we regard as "swelling words of vanity." Surely, sir, it was not for you, however faintly, to countenance those who guard their system by suspending the terrors of damnation over every one who shall dare to doubt! By threatenings to bring the mind into a state of terror and confusion, is not the best preparation for its reception of truth. Why are Calvinists frequently led by their teachers to regard Unitarian sentiments with such horror as absolutely to incapacitate them for a dispassionate and candid examination, if those sentiments be really as destitute of scriptural evidence as these same teachers represent? To such persons you might also have left the practice of insinuating that dissent from their opinions indicates depravity of heart. In the conclusion of your sermon you directly charge those who reject your doctrine of atonement with "culpable inattention," "criminal passions," "irreligious prejudices," "the pride of fancied virtue," &c. Truly, sir, if such be the sources of their unbelief, the veriest slave of sensuality is, compared with them, a prodigy of wisdom. He has some recompense for the abandonment of future bliss in present gratification. Not so the convert from popular doctrines to Unitarianism. To desert a cause upheld alike by venerable establishments, legislative authority, and popular applause; to become an alien from the hearts of friends, neighbours, and relations; to be excluded from the temples where we were wont to worship, and regarded as children of perdition by those who once were brethren in Christ; by those who once courted us to be shunned as if surrounded with a pestilential atmosphere; to be assailed by the poisoned shafts of calumny, which orthodox charity often hurls with an unsparing hand; to tear from the heart feelings which have grown with our growth, and strengthened with our strength, and which were cherished with the fondest complacency,—these are no light sacrifices, yet are they only a part of what almost every convert to our views must make; they are a small part of what many, very many, have suffered. Can men accustomed to religious considerations rush into such difficulties unsupported by the testimony of an approving conscience, and the hope of finally meeting an approving Judge?

Can they rejoice in this tribulation, if such unholy dispositions as you have suggested be the cause of their abandoning a system once dear to them as the essence of all real religion? A considerable proportion of Unitarians were once sincere and serious Calvinists. By what strange infatuation can they have been induced to abandon light for darkness, applause for disgrace, present and future happiness for an unsubstantial phantom? Potent may be the delusions under which you suppose we labour; but if their magic have so extensive an influence, farewell all hope of ever knowing ourselves or truth! Seeing what I have seen of the feelings and characters of Unitarians, especially of those who were educated in a different system, I should, if I credited your insinuations, relinquish all faith in the real existence of virtue or of truth, and regard the world as one wide scene of dark and dreary uncertainty.

It has been much the fashion lately to charge Unitarians with misrepresenting the sentiments which they oppose. This, I suppose, is a favourite weapon, as it is not only used by the leaders in theological warfare, but the subalterns are taught to wield it, and even those in the ranks acquire some dexterity in its management. One meets with it in learned volumes, it is echoed from pulpit to pulpit, and is incessantly urged in conversation. Sometimes, 'tis true, the accusation can only excite a smile, when it is applied to Unitarians who have quoted verbatim from standard Calvinistic authors their statements of particular doctrines; or when, on requesting the statement of their opponents, a reply has been given which had been already posted as calumnious. Indeed it seems that Calvinists may make assertions which Unitarians may not repeat after them. The modern maxim of courts of justice, that truth may be a libel, is adopted in religious controversy. Thus, if we say with Dr. Smith, that Calvinists infer the deity of Christ from the atonement, Dr. Magee* will charge us with misrepresentation; and if we say, with Dr. Watts, that they believe in a dying God, Dr. Smith will charge us with misrepresentation. What, then, is Calvinism? or how can we avoid misrepresenting it? "Who shall decide when *Doctors* disagree?" For the benefit of my unfortunate brethren, who are so frequently offending on this subject, I have endeavoured from one of your notes (p. 83) to ascertain the very faint line that divides truth from calumny. It appears to be true, that you believe that the eternal Son of God, who was equally divine with his Father, assumed our nature, bore our griefs and sorrows, the penal consequences of our sins, and *yielded up his own invaluable life* under agonies unspeakable;* but it is calumnious to say that you "hold the Divine Being to have changed himself into a babe, to have bled, and died, and laid in a tomb." It is true that you believe the Mediator to have been God and man in one person, and that his divine nature was essential to the discharge of that office;† but calumnious to assert that your "sentiment is opposed to the style of the New Testament in its usual *distinct* mention of God and the Mediator." It is true that you believe the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost to be each truly and properly God; but it is calumnious to say that you "deny the Unity of God," or that you believe in "three Supreme Beings." It is true that you believe that Christ "endured the tremendous effects of God's manifested displeasure;" and "in a manner of which even those unhappy spirits who shall drink of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God will never be able to form an adequate idea;"‡ and that "he thus removed an obstacle to the exercise of divine mercy, which would else have been for ever insuperable to human penitence or prayer;"§ but it is calumnious to assert that you attribute to one divine person "capricious rule, malignant passions, and blind rage, and to another a character of superior mildness and benevolence." Why, sir, on your own statement, truth and calumny are very

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* Vol. i. p. 161.

"near allied,
And thin partitions do their bounds divide."

But if, instead of opposing to your list of calumnies the sentiments of your own cautious, cool, philosophical discourse, I had confronted it, as might speedily have been done, with the expressions of Calvinistic authors of the highest reputation, it would have been utterly impossible for friend or foe to tell which was the glorious truth, and which the vile and baseless calumny! You quote (p. 66) part of a note of Dr. Priestley's on Hebrews iv. 13, and observe that "the sequel of this note only shows that the writer conceived of the sentiment which he labours to explode, in a manner to which, I believe, most consistent Calvinists strongly object." That sequel is as follows: "Thus prayer and alms are called sacrifices; but we should greatly perplex ourselves if we should imagine that they are true and proper sacrifices, and into a much greater mistake shall we be led if we imagine that Christ was a real priest, or his death a real sacrifice, and that this sacrifice was an atonement to the anger of God, which, if it had not fallen upon the innocent, must have fallen upon the guilty. For this will contradict the whole tenor of scripture, which uniformly represents God as our merciful Father, as essentially, and of himself, merciful and gracious, and forgiving sins freely, upon repentance alone, and instead of receiving a price for our redemption from his wrath, as himself giving a price for us, when we were, as it were, estranged from him and lost to him." In what respect is the above statement of the doctrine of satisfaction unfair? in what is it "very different" from your views? Is it not the great object of your sermon to show that the death of Christ was a real sacrifice? Do you not expressly affirm that he bore the *tremendous effects* of the *divine displeasure?* that without this atonement the obstacle to man's salvation from the divine character was *insuperable?* What more than this does Dr. Priestley assert? This appeared to him to contradict the whole tenor of scripture. If his statement of the doctrines of scripture be correct, the contradiction is obvious. If incorrect, still he has not misrepresented Calvinism.

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* p. 36. † pp. 53, 54. ‡ p. 34. § p. 56.

The editors of the Improved Version next fall under your severe censure for their note on Hebrews vii. 27: "who needeth not, as the high priests, daily to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, *and* then for those of the people; for this he did once *for all*, when he offered up himself. *This he did, i.e.* offer up sacrifice, first, for his own sins. But Christ, in a moral sense, was sinless: see ver. 26, and chap. iv. 15. His sins therefore were merely ceremonial; that is, being a descendant of the house of Judah (ver. 14), he was, as to the priesthood, in an unconsecrated state. But in the same sense in which Christ offered up a sacrifice for his own sins, in that very sense did he offer himself a sacrifice for the sins of the people." On this you observe: "It is assumed that the *sins* mentioned by the sacred writer are not moral offences, sins properly so called, but only ceremonial disqualifications. Such assumption, without any attempt at proof, especially in a case of so much importance, deserves to be severely reprehended. It is one of the worst artifices of argumentative injustice." Such language is not more severe than unmerited. The "attempt at proof" was before your eyes. The text appeared to the translators to ascribe sins to Christ. They assert that by sins are meant ceremonial disqualifications. They have given, and you have quoted, the proof of this assertion. "Christ, in a *moral* sense, was sinless. His sins, *therefore,* were merely ceremonial." The text seems to place the contrast between the Levitical priests and Christ in that they sacrificed frequently, and he but once. In this case ceremonial disqualifications must be intended. If you and Dr. Priestley* be correct in supposing a further contrast between their sacrifices being both for themselves and for the people, and his respecting "the people only," then moral offences may be intended. The passage is of no controversial importance. Both interpretations have been adopted by different friends of the one system, and may be by those of the other. I should not have noticed your remarks upon it, but for the vehement clamour which you have thus raised against men who have deserved well of the religious public. It is unfortunate that *this* note should have concluded with a reference to their "bold assertions and ungrounded assumptions," and your own "accuracy of investigation." The remarks of Dr. Owen, to which you so triumphantly refer, are not directed against the interpretation of the editors of the Improved Version, but against a very different one of Socinus. In the very heat of your critical career you allow that there are passages in which the disputed term may bear the meaning which they have affixed to it. Their "attempt at proof" you suddenly and totally forget. And when you arrive at your conclusion, it is such as to suit their interpretation better than it does your own. You say, "Therefore the reason of the case, and ample proof from the connection and the whole epistle, determine the relation of the phrase, '*This he did,*' to the single idea of offering a sacrifice." It may be so; but does it not thence follow that the object of this act may in both cases be the same?—in both have the same reference to the united sins (ceremonial or moral) of priests and people? In such a note, and upon such grounds, you should not have condemned to a kind of literary crucifixion a work in many respects so valuable as, even in your own judgment, must be the Improved Version; a work which has the high merit of placing within the reach of the common people a larger store of biblical knowledge than is probably possessed by three-fourths of their instructors; a work which the Eclectic Reviewer thought might "beneficially supply the want of Griesbach."

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* Note in loc.

In another note (p. 76), you have commented on a very heedless expression in a communication to the *Monthly Repository,* and candidly suggested what, I imagine, must have been the writer's meaning. That many of your party will consider this as "a large extension of candour" I have no doubt. You have made them ample amends, however, by asserting of the devotional extracts referred to, that "the basis of the whole is pure naturalism." "There is," you continue, "no recognition of a single doctrine of revelation, except it may be reckoned such to admit that the Jews are kept a distinct people by a particular providence. Every other sentiment and expression is perfectly in the character of a Deist." Let the reader turn to that article—*Monthly Repository,* March 1813, p. 182—and he will ask with me, Is it in the character of a Deist to trace a God of love in every dispensation; to delight in public and in private worship, in religious conversation and instruction; to recognise Christ as our teacher divinely inspired; to anticipate a future state of bliss for the righteous, and corrective punishment for the wicked; to dwell with rapture on that period when God shall be all and in all? Is this deism? Is this naturalism? I should have thought that none would have hesitated to regard such sentiments and feelings as emanations from that sun of righteousness, before whose rising thick darkness covered the earth. But in estimating the productions of Unitarians, our Saviour's rule is too often reversed. The fruit is judged by the tree, and not the tree by its fruit. Our feelings, motives, and actions are condemned, because it is previously assumed that our tenets are radically erroneous. Well is it for us that by a different principle will be regulated the decisions of the tribunal of heaven!

With your discourse I have now to do, or far less painful would it have been to me to have exemplified this controversial unfairness from other publications, where it is much more abundant. Unjust were it now to close these remarks without a tribute of applause to that amiable and candid spirit by which your character and writings are generally distinguished. It is your brightness that makes faults conspicuous in you which might in others pass unnoticed. While these letters serve in some degree for my vindication in abandoning sentiments which, while under your tuition, I have often, with delight as well as with faith, heard flow "mended from your tongue," let them also be the vehicle of my gratitude for the numerous favours which I received from you during that period. This feeling has remained unshaken amid every fluctuation of opinion, and every change of external circumstances. It will accompany me to my grave. Of your kindness and instructions I may truly say:

> "Nec me meminisse pigebit
> Dum memor ipse mei, dum spiritus hos reget artus."

The imperious fiat of conviction has separated me from the guides and companions of my academical labours and delights; but ever shall I remember them with affection and esteem. Often will memory revert to the happy days when "we took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company." Dear to my heart is the hope that our separation will not be eternal. But, sir, I should feel myself unworthy of having been their friend and your pupil did I hesitate to make any sacrifice which truth requires of me, or to bear my testimony, however feeble, to those sentiments which I once opposed, but in which I now glory as being best adapted to display the lustre of the divine character, and promote the holiness and happiness of mankind. Farewell, sir. That every temporal and spiritual blessing may be your portion, is the constant wish and prayer of

W. J. FOX.

THE COMPARATIVE
TENDENCY OF UNITARIANISM AND CALVINISM
TO PROMOTE
LOVE TO GOD AND LOVE TO MAN,

Considered in a Discourse delivered at Brighthelmstone, on Wednesday, June 30, 1813, *before the Southern Unitarian Society.*

[1813.]

> "And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live" (Luke x. 25-28).

However the pages of history may be stained with crimes and errors, it is cheering to find that, in every age and country, and under every form of religion and government, there have been examples of splendid virtue. I consider this as an indisputable fact. Many of the sages, legislators, and heroes of antiquity exhibited a moral greatness which Christians may be allowed to contemplate with admiration. Their characters remain, like the monuments of their genius, to claim the praise and excite the emulation of succeeding ages. Among the worshipers of the celestial bodies, of deified heroes, or of imaginary beings, there have lived those whose actions demonstrated that the errors of education had not been able to obliterate the law of God written in their hearts. The very spirit and essence of the gospel appears embodied in such men as Fénélon, Jortin, Campbell, Doddridge, and Lindsey; yet were they scattered through all the differing and hostile parties of professing Christians. What do we hence infer? That religious opinion is a matter of complete indifference? That truth and error are alike favourable to virtue? That it is of no consequence whether we adore the host of heaven, the shades of our departed ancestors, the Hindû triad, the pseudo-Christian Trinity, or the one God and Father of all? By no means. A flower may grow in many a clime, which yet requires a peculiar soil and culture for the full display of its beauties; and virtue, though it may coexist with almost any system of opinions, still is more indebted to some speculative views than to others for its general production, rapid progress, full development, and complete maturity. While some men are made good by their creeds, others are good in spite of their creeds. That one opinion tends to promote virtue, and another vice; and that systems which have, upon the whole, a beneficial tendency, yet differ in the extent of their influence, is full as obvious as that there are valuable characters in all parties. Let the one fact preserve us from uncharitable judgment, and the other excite us to zealous exertion. We are associated for the promotion of Unitarian principles, not only because we think them more consistent than popular notions with reason and with scripture, but because we are convinced of their superior efficacy for the production and advancement of devotion and morality. We blend, in the object of our union and exertions, the knowledge of the scriptures with the practice of virtue. The declaration of our Lord concerning false prophets, "By their fruits ye shall know them,"* is fairly applicable to systems of doctrine. It is a test which we wish all parties to use, as its application will familiarise them with the idea that truth is chiefly valuable as the means of promoting holiness. The text warrants our asserting, that to make men love God and each other is the great end for which revelation was given to mankind.† That view of the doctrines of the gospel in which they appear most conducive to this object has strong claims upon our preference. Our present inquiry is into the relative efficiency for this purpose of the Unitarian and the Calvinistic interpretations of the New Testament; and we have to do, therefore, not so much directly with their truth or falsehood, as with their influence upon the hearts and lives of those by whom they are believed.

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* Matthew vii. 20.

† Some have supposed the language of the text to be ironical, and the real doctrine of Christ to be, that we cannot yield such an obedience to the will of God as he has graciously promised to reward with eternal life, but must rest our hopes upon imputed sufferings and an imputed righteousness. If Jesus taught the notions now so extensively propagated under the sanction of his name, this interpretation will perhaps be unavoidable. To the candid inquirer it must appear inconsistent with his character, his general mode of teaching, the connection of the text, and the obvious sentiment of such passages as the following: Matthew xxii. 35-40; Acts x. 34; 1 Tim. iv. 8, &c.

This limitation of the subject will also exclude many interesting considerations which would naturally suggest themselves in an attempt to explain and enforce the important duties of love to God and love to man. It would be delightful to trace the divine benevolence flowing like a rich stream from an exhaustless source, and every where bearing with it beauty, fertility, and delight; to observe it in the shady grove, the flowery mead, the luxurious vineyard, and the golden grain, the solid earth, the rolling ocean, and the azure heavens spangled with countless orbs of light; to mark it in the myriads of sentient beings which people every part of this wide world, and whose organs are so many channels through which the full tide of pleasure flows to them from surrounding objects; in man, gifted with powers so vast and various, and formed for happiness the most exalted; in the conduct of Providence, oft indeed inscrutable, yet still, upon the whole, displaying to every observer a profusion of wisdom, power, and love; or to unfold those kindly charities, prompted by nature and enjoined by revelation, which make man a partner in the joys and sorrows of his fellow-man, and, while by gentlest bonds they connect us with each other, unite us also with Him whose nature and whose name is love, the God in whom we all "live, move, and have our being."* But we have not now to delineate the richness of the soil, or beauty of the prospect; we must ascertain the province to which it belongs. Our task is, not to paint its loveliness, but to vindicate its possession.

It is not difficult to compare the influence of Calvinism and Unitarianism upon our feelings, as, in their leading, peculiar principles, they are directly opposed to each other. Unitarianism teaches that God is, strictly and properly, one; "one being, person, or mind:" Calvinism, that his one essence subsists in three persons. Unitarianism, that he is the universal Parent of his creatures: Calvinism, that he loves, with an eternal and effectual love, only the elect. Unitarianism, that he forgives sin, on repentance, freely, from his own essential and spontaneous mercy: Calvinism, that his character restricts him from ever pardoning sin, or remitting its penal consequences to the offender, unless a proper substitute make atonement to his justice. Unitarianism, that punishment is temporary and remedial: Calvinism, that it is vindictive and eternal. It cannot be that notions so opposite should produce the same effects on the hearts of men.

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* Acts xvii. 28.

Every one must observe, on the very first view of our subject, that Unitarianism, if true, possesses one decided advantage over Calvinism, in exciting love to God, inasmuch as it cleanses his worship from that idolatrous leaven which has been mingled with it by the adoration of his son and messenger, Jesus Christ: of him who declared that he could of himself do nothing; that he knew not the day of judgment; that we should ask nothing of him, but of his Father; that his Father, who dwelt in him, wrought his miracles; that his words were not his own, but the Father's who sent him; and that his Father was the only true God:* but whom, in defiance of these solemn and repeated declarations, his followers have, as if resolved to surpass the Jews, whose bitter mockery only decked him in the insignia of an earthly sovereignty, placed, in imagination, on the throne of that Father whom he adored, and whose sole worship he uniformly enjoined and practised. If, on this subject, Unitarians err, theirs is the error of loving God too much; of confining too rigidly to him the supreme homage of their hearts and lips: if Calvinists err, it is from being too ready to render to another that which is due to God alone.

It is replied to this statement, that the worship of Christ is consistent with that love to God which Christianity enjoins, because it was practised by the first teachers of Christianity. Let us grant, for the sake of argument, that the facts recorded in the New Testament, which are by many supposed to be acts of adoration to Christ, really were such. Still, they are few, very few:† they bear scarcely an assignable proportion to the numerous instances in which worship is addressed to his Father, and our Father. Were it impossible to explain them on Unitarian principles, they would only warrant an occasional and infrequent adoration of the Son. The same love to God which influenced the first Christians would induce us, like them, to make him generally the object of our worship. But a belief in the equality of the Son with the Father tends to produce, and in Calvinistic devotions does produce, a much larger relative proportion of homage to the Son than, granting every instance which they contend for, would be sanctioned by scripture example. That cannot be an apostolic doctrine which leads us to differ from apostolic practice; nor that system most conducive to the love of God which tends to diminish the

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* Vide John v. 30; Mark xiii. 32; John xvi. 23, xiv. 10, xii. 49, xvii. 3.

† The extensive meaning of the term *worship*, which includes all

kinds of respect and homage, will surely prevent the reflecting Calvinist from regarding as adoration the honours paid to Jesus while on earth by many who were relieved by his miraculous power from various diseases: especially as, if he really were the supreme God, it could not be known to them. His supposed scripture examples will then be reduced to Acts vii. 59, 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9, and the ascriptions of glory to Christ in the Revelation of St. John. But, with Stephen and Paul, Jesus was personally present; he was the depositary of that miraculous power which was communicated to them as the interests of his cause required: their applications to him were no more divine worship than are our petitions for protection to a powerful friend, or a magistrate. Waiving, however, this reply, the following argument as to the application of their example appears to me unanswerable: "If they (the apostles) worshiped Christ, they acted in direct contradiction to his own direction. In that day, said he (John xvi. 23), *ye shall ask me nothing:* verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever *ye shall ask the* Father *in my name*, HE *will give it you.* If the apostles, therefore, worshiped Jesus after this strong declaration, they either did from error what they had no authority to do, or they indulged in a practice which, whatever its use in the apostolic age, is not to be followed or observed by Christians now. In either case, their practice is of no avail" (FULLAGAR'S *Observations on Christian Doctrine and Duty*). The ascriptions of praise to Jesus in the Revelation of St. John are addressed to him *as the lamb who was slain:* those who contend that such ascriptions are acts of worship must therefore admit either that he was adored as man, or that he died as God; both which inferences they warmly disclaim. One of them, however, must be admitted, or all support of their practice from such passages must be relinquished. Strange is it that on such grounds the Son should have been associated with the Father as an equal object of worship; and still stranger that a third divine person should have been introduced, for whose worship it is not even pretended that scripture furnishes either example or precept!

honours allowed by all to have been paid him by the first Christians.

Personal distinctions in the Deity are unfavourable to the supreme love of God. They divide, and by dividing diminish, our affection towards him. All Christians look to God for similar blessings. We, with Calvinists, humbly expect from him a continuance of that kind, providential care which has hitherto guarded and guided us; a complete redemption from sin, suffering, and mortality; all that is really good for us in this life; and an endless life of happiness hereafter: but for these mercies we rely upon one divine person only. He may employ various means and agents: through active and ingenious men may come the advantages and comforts of this life; through Christ may flow the blessings of religion and the hope of immortality: still, He is the sole and ultimate source, the author of every good and perfect gift; and every one of this multitude of favours leads us in grateful acknowledgment, humble dependence, and devout affection, directly to himself. They expect one blessing from the Father, another from the Son, another from the Holy Ghost. These persons take different parts, fill different offices in the plan of redemption; each is an original and independent source of good; and hence unavoidably results a division of affection, a gratitude and love to each person proportionate to the importance of his office and the extent of his bounties,—a gratitude and love distinct from that excited by mercies which it is the peculiar province of either of the other persons to bestow: in short, to each divine person a limited and partial affection, which neither is in itself, nor can become by connection with the love borne to the other persons of the trinity, such a supreme and boundless affection as is due to the one infinite God.

If any such distinctions have the effect of dividing, distracting, and diminishing our love to God, what shall we say of those popular representations which tend completely to exclude the Father of all from the hearts of his creatures and his children? Trinitarians too often make such a distribution of divine offices and operations as to transfer all that is lovely from the Father to the Son. Do we inquire who created the universe? We are told, The Son. Who, by his providence, supports and regulates all things? The

Son. Who redeemed sinners? The Son. Who sanctifies the depraved? The Spirit, procured by the sufferings of the Son. From whom will flow, and in whom will centre, the bliss of heaven? The Son. The Father, all benignity as he is, appears but as the foil to his excellence, the shade to his brightness. He comes forward but as the minister of vengeance, to exact the sufferings and blood of the incarnate Son, and to dispense just that portion of favour which is thus purchased of his justice, and then retires from view. Nor is the obvious inference from this statement to be eluded by calling Christ the gift of his Father. He is so called in scripture; and Unitarians, believing that he was dependent on the Father, may use such language with propriety. In the mouths of those who assert the complete independency of the Son, and his strict equality with the Father, it is emptiness and vanity.

We have been hitherto occupied with considerations arising directly out of the doctrine of the Trinity: Calvinism has other tenets, relative to the divine character and conduct, which now claim our attention.

Can it promote love to God to believe that by his decree, "for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death"?* Is there aught lovely in a glory which requires for its display that eternal flames should be kindled, and fed with immortal victims? Is it possible to love a Being who is represented as giving life to millions of creatures with the express design of connecting with that life intolerable misery to all eternity? Or if we substitute for this sentiment the apparently milder one of moderate Calvinism, that he did not decree the destruction of the non-elect, but only omitted to decree their salvation (and this, when we are speaking of an omnipotent Being, is rather a variation of words than of idea), does this present us with so amiable a Being as he who exercises his creating power with a view to his creatures' happiness, and whose glory consists only in their purity and felicity?

Can it promote love to God to believe that he established such a moral constitution as that, by one sin of one man, the whole human race have "lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell for ever"?* Some instances are furnished by the annals of despotism in which the wantonness of power has doomed all the relatives of an offender to death; but none in which the offender's race has been perpetuated only to train up victims for the hand of the executioner. This was a refinement of cruelty reserved for theologians to invent, and attribute to the gracious Parent of the Universe. In the present state of society, if the mightiest monarch upon earth were to adopt, in the distribution of temporal punishment, a principle similar to that on which God is here represented as inflicting eternal punishment, he not only would not be loved, he would not be endured. A universal combination would immediately stop his career; and his power, if not his life, would be presented as an acceptable offering at the shrine of insulted humanity. Well is it that the thousands of children who are taught to lisp the assertion just quoted know little of the meaning of what they utter. If they were to have a full conception of the sentiment which their expressions convey, we might apprehend that there would be engendered in their hearts a feeling towards God too horrible to be mentioned.

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* *Assembly's Confession*, c. iii.

Can it promote love to God to believe that the way in which he has chosen to remit the punishment of sin is by transferring its guilt, or the consequences of its guilt, from the sinner to an innocent person, his eternal and equal Son in an incarnate state, whose infinite dignity makes his sufferings of infinite value, thus satisfying every claim of law, and rendering the salvation of man an act, not of mercy, but of justice? Is not grace excluded by such a system? If the punishment of every sin be inflicted,—whether on the transgressor or his substitute it matters not,—there is no need of mercy in God, no opportunity for the exercise of that glorious attribute. He whose debts are discharged claims his deliverance of justice, not of favour. Is there a man of generous heart who would accept a throne, or even the empire of the world, on condition that he should never pardon an offender, however penitent, unless some faultless subject were content to suffer in his stead? Who would not spurn dominion, if proffered on such degrading terms? And does this restriction fetter the omnipotent hand that grasps the sceptre of universal empire? No. God hath mercy on whom he will have mercy; He is the God of pardons; He is the Father of the returning prodigal, receiving him back with free, unpurchased kindness:* therefore we rejoice that the Lord reigneth, and love him, though arrayed in all the majesty of universal sovereignty.

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* *Assembly's Catechism.*

Can it promote love to God to believe that he punishes vindictively? that he causes suffering, not to make it the source of good, but merely as a sacrifice to retributive justice? that he designs not, what every humane magistrate wishes, to make punishment the means of reformation? Will the exertion of Omnipotence to eternalise sin and misery advance his glory, increase his happiness, or excite our affection? Can there be music to his ears in the groans, the agony, the deep despair of millions, whom he has made immortal, but whom he never intended to make happy? Let the teachers of religion pause ere they ascribe to the God whom they call upon us to love principles which themselves would blush to own, and at the imputation of which they would feel indignant.

It has been "argued in favour of the tendency of Calvinistic doctrines to promote the love of God, that upon those principles we have more to love him for than upon the other."† They are said to represent the state of the world as more deplorable, and God's gift of his Son for its redemption as of greater value. Our condition is indeed deplorable, if, as descendants of Adam, we inherit an irresistible depravity of nature and the eternal curse of God. It will scarcely be contended that we should love God for having, in consequence of a transaction to which we could not be parties, brought us into being under such dreadful circumstances. Calvinists must reconcile the depravation and condemnation of the human race, on account of the sin of Adam, to the justice of God, before they can represent it as a display of goodness and a motive to gratitude. Their love to God must arise, not from his placing us in such a situation, but from his bringing us out of it. This is effected by the gift of his Son. But what propriety is there in loving the Father for giving the Son, if the Son be omnipotent and independent? On their principles, the Father could no more give the Son than the Son could give the Father. We must have a right by creation, purchase, or possession, in what we give: to acquire such a right over a person properly and essentially independent is manifestly impossible.

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* Exod. xxxiii. 19; Nehem. ix. 17; Luke xv.

† *Fuller's Systems compared*, p. 134, second ed. For an able reply to the argumentative part of this book, see Dr. Toulmin's *Practical Efficacy of the Unitarian Doctrine*. Its pretended statements of fact are best refuted by the memoirs of Lindsey, Priestley, Jebb, Mrs. Lindsey (*Monthly Repository*, Feb. 1812), &c.; but at these the admirers of that work can seldom be induced to look.

The love to God which arises from Unitarian principles has less of selfishness in it than that which the opposite system tends to produce. The Calvinist loves God for selecting *him* for bliss, while millions of his fellow-creatures, not more guilty than himself, are irremediably doomed to never-ending torments. The Unitarian loves God, not only for favours bestowed upon himself, but because his tender mercies are over all his works; because he is the God of pardons and mercies; because he is the Father, the God of love, not to an elect few, but to all that live and feel. Oh, lovely idea of the loveliest of Beings! While we thus contemplate him, our bosoms glow with an ardent, sacred, generous affection; every narrow, mean, selfish feeling is annihilated; we behold all worlds and all beings encircled in the arms of boundless benevolence; our love rises into rapturous devotion, and we burst forth in praises of him who is all in all.

It is necessary now to proceed to the other branch of our subject: the comparative tendency of Calvinism and Unitarianism to promote the love of our fellow-creatures.

Love to man is connected with, and founded upon, the love of God. If one believes that God only loves the elect, and another that he loves all men, is it not fair to infer that the benevolence of the first will be bounded by the limits which he assigns to that of his God, while that of the second will be in like manner extensive? Can the former heartily desire and pray for the happiness of all, while he believes that God only designs to bless a select portion of mankind? If the Calvinist does not profess to love all mankind, to love them so as to desire their final happiness, he yields the palm of superior benevolence to the Unitarian. If he does profess it, he then claims the honour of greater benevolence than he attributes to his Deity.

Complacency is not essential to benevolence: we may wish well to a being possessed of no amiable quality whatever. Yet benevolence is promoted by complacency. A deeper interest, a stronger affection, must be excited by objects in which good is blended with evil, than by those which are uniformly and totally corrupt. If we believe that children are completely depraved, and that it is the dictate of their nature to hate God and to love all evil, we cannot feel for them so strong affection as if we think that "of such is the kingdom of heaven."* Calvinism represents man as "wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body;" as, by original corruption, "utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil."† We believe that man, being placed in a state of trial, on his conduct in which his future happiness depends, is by nature qualified for a moral probation, and alike capable of displaying the most exalted virtues and the most degrading vices. We think that, in fact, the human character is of a diversified cast, the best being not without numerous failings, and the most depraved sometimes manifesting that "the law of God written on the heart" cannot be wholly obliterated. On which view is it easier to obey the command of heaven, and love our neighbour as ourselves? It must be easier to love a friend than an enemy; a being with some virtues than one of pure malignity; man considered as an imperfect race, which in its brightest characters has some shades of vice, and in its worst some traces of goodness, than man by nature thoroughly depraved and vicious, a loathsome compound of every moral evil, and deservedly under the tremendous and universal curse of God.

Christian charity "thinketh no evil." A censorious disposition is opposed to the spirit of the gospel and the essential graces of the Christian character. We are not to judge as we would not be judged. For those who hold that before man has undergone a supernatural change, called regeneration, it is impossible for him to think a good thought or to perform a good action, it must be extremely difficult to avoid censoriousness. They trace their own good deeds to the principle of divine grace implanted within them.

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* Matt. xix. 14.

† *Assembly's Confession*, c. vi.

But those who are not conscious of such a change as they imagine essential to the production of any thing really good in man, frequently act in a manner apparently virtuous, and so as to leave no difference in external circumstance from their own good works. To reconcile this fact with their theory of the natural depravity of man, they are obliged to suppose an obliquity of motive of which no evidence can be adduced, and which, if it exist, can only be known to the individual and his God. Can any thing be more unjust than that the moral character of men's actions should be determined by their creeds?—that the same deed, proceeding avowedly from the same motive, should be in one the result of divine grace, and in another sinful? Calvinism teaches that the unregenerate sin even when they do what God has commanded:* what is the tendency of this sentiment but to destroy all confidential intercourse, and fill the world with suspicions and slanders?

Were the doctrine of Satisfaction pushed to its legitimate consequences, what would become of the great Christian duty of forgiving injuries? When we pray that our Father in heaven would forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us, or are told to be kind, tender-hearted, forgiving one another as God, by Christ, has forgiven us,† is it meant that we should only forgive when our claims are granted and justice is fully satisfied? Are we only to release our debtors when some one has discharged their debt? or only to pardon those who have injured us when they, or some innocent person in their stead, have suffered the full extent of legal punishment? Such, we are taught by Calvinists, is the divine mode of forgiveness; and consequently such would be practically theirs, were it not that they hold principles inconsistent with their system, or that they suffer their feelings to gain a righteous victory over their creeds.

Paul asserts the resurrection of Jesus to be the only essential truth of Christianity.‡ Does it promote love to our neighbour to consider him as not entitled to the name of

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* *Assembly's Confession*, c. xvi. § 7.

† Matt. vi. 12, 14, 15; Ephes. iv. 32.

‡ Romans x. 9: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

Christian because he does not, in addition to this, believe a number of propositions which may or may not be true, but which he cannot discover in the New Testament, and without which he lives a holy life?

Love we our fellow-creatures better for believing that the time will come when our feelings will be thoroughly reconciled to their eternal misery, and we shall rejoice in it as a display of the divine glory? On the contrary, does it not attach us much more firmly to them if we view the whole race as children of an impartial and tender parent, who loves us all, and who, by a wise, though in some cases a long and severe discipline, is promoting the good of all?

The contrast which has been thus far pursued would admit of more extended amplification, and might be applied to the subordinate parts of the opposite systems, and to the minuter feelings and duties of the Christian. From what has been stated a fair estimate may be formed of what would be the general result. Whether facts accord with this view of the relative influence of doctrines is best known, and can indeed only be known, by the Searcher of hearts. To drag into the glare of day the failings of one class of professing Christians, in order to display in greater lustre the virtues of another class, is what I shall not attempt. It is enough that in the list of Unitarians science finds enrolled its most successful votaries, our country its brightest ornaments, Christianity its ablest defenders, and humanity its best benefactors.* We need not endeavour to exalt these by depreciating others. It is our duty, it is our delight, to trace, to love, to praise, and to imitate virtue, wherever it be found. From the writings of our opponents would we cull the flowers of devotion and benevolence, though to wound us they were surrounded with the thorns of controversy. From their lives would we copy the virtues which adorn them, though their hearts own not for us a brother's love, and their tongues refuse us the name of Christian. We know that "in every nation," and in every sect, "he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him;"† and what God has sanctified we dare not, we desire not, to call unholy. While we assert the superior efficacy of the truths which we believe, we desire not so much to obtain a controversial triumph as to excite humility that our characters so little correspond with these high pretensions, and exertions to perfect in us that which is wanting. While we oppose the notion of a plurality of divine persons, let us not neglect to render to the one God the homage of our hearts and lips. While we vindicate the Father from the unlovely attributes with which some have darkened his character, let our love towards him be more pure and fervent than theirs. While we assert the freeness of his mercy, let us never be revengeful or implacable. If we have different views from others of the nature and the state of man, let those views make us more charitable towards our fellow-creatures, more severe towards ourselves. Thus shall we best advocate the cause, and promote the interests of truth and virtue.

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* That this is not an empty boast, witness the illustrious names of Locke, Newton, Lardner, Priestley, Lindsey, Jebb, &c.

† Acts x. 35.

To ascertain the tendency and not the truth of opinions has been the object of this discourse. If, however, we have shown the superiority of Unitarianism to Calvinism in its moral tendency, this cannot but be considered as a valuable argument for its truth. That system which best promotes the designs of Christianity has a strong presumption in favour of its being the genuine doctrine of Christ. Truth and utility are connected. If both appear to characterise our sentiments, we are justified in endeavouring to disseminate them—we are bound to do so; and let Unitarians feel all the force of the sacred obligation. The dictates of conscience, the example of the apostles, the state of the religious world, the progress of education and inquiry, the best interests of man, the honour of God, the commands and promises of revelation, all unite to call us to exertion and to promise us success. Yet a little while, and genuine Christianity shall rise, like its great author, glorious and triumphant from the abodes of darkness and corruption, to reign for evermore!

A REPLY TO POPULAR OBJECTIONS AGAINST UNITARIANISM.

A Sermon preached at Bristol, on Wednesday, June 21, 1815, *before the Western Unitarian Society.*

[1815.]

"For as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against" (Acts xxviii. 22).

How similar the fate of the original propagators and the modern revivers of the pure doctrines of Jesus! That Unitarianism and Christianity are identical, we have, at least, the evidence of their meeting with the same reception. Bigoted Jews and proud philosophers, crafty politicians and mercenary priests, combined to crush the one; and the other has been assailed by the mitred prelate and the unbeneficed dissenter, the narrow-minded sectarian and the contemptuous sceptic. Over their adversaries the apostles triumphed, and the attacks of ours have been not feebly repelled. We have had, and we still have, champions capable of grappling successfully with the mightiest antagonist, and who, in the hard-fought fields of controversy, move on conquering and to conquer. Safe in their hands is the precious deposit of religious truth from the assaults of learned adversaries; but if we consult utility as well as victory, there is another class of objectors who demand our attention—there is an humbler, yet perhaps a wider province, in which it is required of us to plead the cause of liberal and rational opinions. To the poor was the gospel first preached, and it is time that their faith should be brought back to its original simplicity. On them little impression can be made by metaphysical argument, deep research, or ingenious criticism. Such qualities confer upon the writings of our advocates a high degree of worth and influence; but it is a worth which they cannot estimate, an influence which they do not feel. The diffusion of Unitarian sentiments is impeded, not so much by the hostility of literary men, as by the operation of popular objections—of objections only formidable because they are prevalent, and only unrefuted because they have been disregarded. A brief review of these cannot be foreign to the occasion of our present meeting. The honourable and benevolent object of your Society is to promote Christian knowledge and the practice of virtue; and you will regard with candour even the feeblest attempt to coöperate with your labours and further your designs.

First objection.—It is believed by many that Unitarianism is an unscriptural system; rather philosophical than religious; and either accompanied with neglect, or supported by the perversion, of the sacred writings.

Three facts have combined to produce this impression: it is true that Unitarians appeal to nature and to reason as well as to the scriptures; that their interpretations of some texts appear, at first sight, new and far-fetched; and that there are passages in the modern editions of the New Testament which they contend should be expunged as interpolations.

But these facts form no just presumption against the truth of our principles. If revelation be the word of God, reason also is his gift, and nature his work; and where has he forbidden the exercise of the one, or the contemplation of the other? Why do they exist, but that by the one should be deduced from the other proofs of his being and illustrations of his character? As to interpretations of scripture, the proper question is not whether they be to us new or old, but whether they be correct or false. Our Lord and his apostles gave expositions of parts of the Old Testament which were far from according with the prejudices of their hearers. The Protestant divines, at the Reformation, advanced many commentaries on scripture widely different from those which had been long and generally received. And, in general, whenever erroneous doctrines have long prevailed, erroneous interpretations must, of necessity, have become established also, and habit will make the genuine meaning of texts appear new, strange, and forced. Alterations in the sacred text, because it accords not with our notions, would be indeed disingenuous; but if, as we believe, in the course of ages some few corruptions have been introduced, the attempt to restore its purity is not disgraceful, but honourable.

The truth is, that Unitarianism is preëminently a scriptural system. We have the peculiar advantage of being able both to assert what we believe, and to deny what we renounce, in the clear, decisive, unperverted words of scripture; and this privilege we share with none of our theological opponents. The doctrines which we hold are, the unity and paternity of God; the humanity, or at least the inferior nature, of Jesus Christ; that holiness alone is essential to salvation; and that purity and bliss will ultimately be universal. Not only is it possible to express these sentiments in scriptural language, but it may safely be affirmed, that in no other way can they be so well expressed: "To us there is but one God, the Father;" "There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;" "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God;" "God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him;" "God shall be all in all;" "Every creature which is in heaven and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever!" This mode of stating our opinions is not new; may it never become obsolete! It places us on high vantage-ground above our opponents. Vainly will they attempt to follow us; for where, from Genesis to Revelation, can be found an assertion that in the unity of the divine essence there are three divine persons? The doctrines which we oppose are, a plurality of divine persons; the omnipotence and independence of Christ, and his equality with the Father; the natural and total depravity of man; the transferable nature of sin and righteousness; and the vindictiveness of divine punishment. How can we more strongly utter our denial than by the following quotations?—"Thou shalt have no other gods before me;" "I can of mine own self do nothing;" "All power is given unto me;" "The Father is greater than I;" "Of such (children) is the kingdom of heaven;"

"The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son;" "Every man shall bear his own burden;" "God will not always chide, neither will he keep his anger for ever;" "He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." That system cannot be called unscriptural which needs no other language than that of the sacred volume for its strongest assertion of every peculiar tenet, and its most solemn protest against the opposite notions. The fact ought not lightly to be passed over. Is it possible that the scriptures should have been so written as to affirm, in terms clear and express, all the errors of a damnable heresy?—so as also to deny, in terms clear and express, the doctrines whose belief is essential to salvation? It cannot be; the supposition would transform the revelation of a God of truth and mercy into a snare to entangle us in error and destruction. When the minds of men shall be roused to reflection, how will this charge recoil on those by whom it has been advanced! Calvinism is indebted to metaphysics, and bad metaphysics too, for some of its first principles. Witness its curious hypothesis of two natures in the one person of Christ, in one of which natures there are three persons. This is not scriptural; it is an artificial expedient to reconcile opinions and texts which must ever remain at variance. Witness also its deduction of the eternity of future punishment from the infinity of sin, and of this from the infinity of the Lawgiver; and its complicated doctrines of federal responsibility, vicarious suffering, and transferable merit, which involve assumptions respecting the nature of God, of man, and of virtue, founded not on scripture, but on the barbarous and obsolete speculations of schoolmen, and become prevalent through forgetfulness of the apostolic caution: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."

Nor are Calvinistic interpretations of scripture always easy and natural, however long familiarity may have reconciled the mind to what, on impartial consideration, must be pronounced harsh and ridiculous. Is it not strange that the threatening annexed to the first trangression, "Thou shalt surely die," should mean, Thou and all thy posterity shall be condemned to an immortality of misery? That "God will have all men to be saved" should bear a meaning (not very easily discerned) consistent with his foredooming, or abandoning, a large proportion of mankind to inevitable and endless pain? That when "the world," "the whole world," "all men," are represented as participating in Christian salvation, we are only to understand that some persons will be saved out of many different countries? That "Son of man" should be the distinguishing appellation of him who was very and eternal God, while "partakers of a divine nature" are allowed to be merely human? Can these be paralleled by our explaining figuratively the ascription of creation to Christ, when we know that figuratively, by the regenerating influence of the gospel, he was, but that literally he could not be, a Creator? That interpretation is sanctioned by many similar applications of the metaphor;* but these violate all scriptural uses of language and rational principles of exposition.

The passage of most importance to which we object as interpolated is 1 John v. 7. It is now given up by the ablest critics of all denominations; and the persevering zeal of Unitarians has been far from useless in vindicating the purity of the sacred text. Yet, in defiance of all evidence, does party spirit still cling to that rotten support; still quote as the word of God what the apostle never wrote; and seek to cover the obstinate retention of a manifest corruption by calumniating those who would give the New Testament to the world in its original state.

Second objection.—Unitarianism is a cold and heartless system, alike unfavourable to zeal and devotion.

Of this we desire no stronger refutation than a reference to the principles which are thus accused. Admiration, love, hope, joy, and every benevolent and pious emotion, are their natural and unavoidable results in the heart of him by whom they are sincerely believed. Who can call the universal paternity of God a powerless or a chilling doctrine?

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* Moral changes are frequently represented as creations; see Isaiah xliii. 1, 7, 15; Eph. ii. 10; 2 Cor. v. 17; Rev. xxi. 5. The metaphor appears natural and intelligible enough when men are not hunting after mysteries. Dr. Watts says, "This is the day the Lord hath *made*:" but who ever supposed him to mean more than that the Sunday was distinguished from other days by having witnessed the resurrection of Christ, and being consecrated to religious purposes?

Who will say that the devout affection due to the Author of all good is weakened by referring all blessings to one being alone, instead of dividing them among three persons, filling distinct offices, and bestowing separate mercies? By which doctrine are emotions of admiration and love most excited, that of eternal misery, or that of the final purification and bliss of all intelligent creatures by the operations of almighty benevolence?*

If the Book of Psalms be taken as the model of devout feeling, we certainly are not backward to admire and cultivate it. Be it remembered that the pure, glowing, and elevated emotions there delineated are the result of strictly Unitarian principles. The effusions of love and praise to God and Christ, in the New Testament, are equally consistent with our principles and congenial to our hearts.

We are, however, not advocates for making feeling the essence of religion. "It is in a great degree constitutional, and is by no means found in exact proportion to the virtue of a character." Right views and habits are not less important, nor do they occupy less space in that volume to which we all refer as the standard of religion. There is too much excitement about the popular faith. The cultivation of the understanding, and the regulation of the life, are thrown into the shade, to dwell on topics which merely produce temporary emotion. It is rather a presumption for than against Unitarianism, that it suits not the vitiated palate and feverish heart of those who have been accustomed to a religion of passion. They are like readers of romance, who cannot relish the sober facts of history; or lovers of war, whose stormy passions cannot endure the repose and regularity of peace: yet, however uncongenial with their thirst for excitement, the one is a source of knowledge, the other of happiness, to mankind.

Zeal is supposed to be inseparable from true religion, and Unitarianism is charged with a deplorable deficiency of this quality. We are asked, Where are our missionary societies, heathen converts, &c.? The forefathers of the objectors were triumphantly asked the same questions by the Catholics, from whom they seceded; and to them we refer for a reply, founded alike on their circumstances and ours. If zeal can only be supported by the notion that belief in our opinions is essential to salvation, may we ever remain without it! If a decided conviction of the utility of free inquiry, the importance of religious truth, the sole right of the Father to divine honours, and the efficacy of Unitarianism to expand the heart, elevate the character, and tranquillise the mind, be adequate motives to zealous exertion, these we have,—and on these we can act without judging the hearts of others, or consigning to misery the many wise and good men from whom we differ.

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* It is proper to remark, that the doctrine of final restitution is not held by all Unitarians. The author has treated it as a Unitarian doctrine, because he coincides in the opinion of most of our theological opponents on its intimate connection with the first principles of Unitarianism.

A third objection is, that Unitarianism degrades the Son of God.

He occupies not the same place in our as in the popular creed: we do not believe him to be very and eternal God, nor do we pay him divine honours. Yet we plead "Not guilty" to the charge. We cannot think him degraded by our denying to him a character which he disclaimed,* and withholding a worship which he prohibited.† Every honour which Scripture demands for him is by us rendered most willingly and gladly. From his instructions we form our sentiments; by his precepts we regulate our conduct; we are proud of bearing his name, and desirous of copying his example; on his resurrection rest our hopes of immortality; from his lips we expect our future sentence; and to his name we ascribe glory and honour for ever! Who, then, shall impute to us a voluntary infringement of his rights, or degradation of his character?

There should be a distinction made between wilful misrepresentation and the necessary result of honest conviction. If we oppose the worship of Christ, it is because we think it unscriptural, not because we are deficient in the respect and veneration due to his character. Before the coming of Christ, Moses was the most illustrious of the messengers of God; the Apostles assigned him but the second place: could they, therefore, be fairly charged with degrading him? At the Reformation, the Protestants opposed as idolatrous the worship of the mother of Christ; were they, therefore, her enemies and calumniators? Our circumstances and our justification are precisely similar.

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* "Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God" (Matthew xix. 16).

† "In that day ye shall ask me nothing" (John xvi. 23).

And in what respect do we degrade Christ? We make his moral triumphs more splendid. There is no merit in the conquests of an invulnerable hero. God cannot be tempted; and if Christ was God, his resistance to temptations which appeal only to the weaknesses of humanity could cost no effort, and deserve no honour. It is only on our views of his character that his conflict was real and his success glorious. We make his patience under insult and suffering more illustrious. God is essentially impassible. He cannot be liable to pain and sorrow. The notion of the Saviour's deity at once destroys his merit in not reviling when reviled, not complaining when afflicted, not avenging when injured, not shrinking from incessant exertion, the privation of food and rest, and the extreme of bodily torture. That to him would be unfelt which to us appears overwhelming. The death of Christ is celebrated as an act of the most heroic love; and so it was, if with human feelings he contemplated that dreadful event; but not if, possessed of a superior nature, he expected it as a release from his temporary sojourn on earth, and a return to his native habitation; then, instead of submitting to it from unexampled benevolence, he might have desired it from mere selfishness.

In truth, it does appear that, so far from degrading Christ, we are his vindicators from degradation. This is eminently the case if we attend to his discourses. For instance, he affirms, speaking of his second coming, "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father" (Mark xiii. 32). Now, this assertion can only be true on the supposition that he was not God. The advocates for his divinity have two ways of explaining the passage: 1st, That he did not know it *as man*, though he did as God. But if both natures were united in one person, what he knew in one character he must know in the other also. Besides, the question was addressed to him in his highest capacity, as the Messiah, to which character deity is supposed to be essential, and in that character he answered, placing himself above other men, and messengers of heaven. Therefore, in his highest capacity he did not know it, and was not God. 2d, That he did not know it *as a subject of revelation.* This effort at explanation is equally unsuccessful; for, granting so unfounded and unreasonable an interpretation of the word *know,* it would not then be true that the Father himself knew it. It was no more a subject of revelation by him than by the Son; and the untruth is only shifted instead of being removed. There is no avoiding the obvious fact, that Christ affirms a difference of knowledge between his Father and himself. The denial of his divinity, and the assertion of his veracity, must stand or fall together. Let any candid man consider this and similar passages, and then say who those are that degrade Christ.

Is it not possible for the character of the Deity to be degraded by improper representations? And, if possible, is it not accomplished by describing him as becoming incarnate; being born, nursed, and suckled; dwelling for thirty years in human flesh, and performing all the functions of humanity; and at length suffering death by crucifixion? Is all this consistent with his spirituality, dignity, purity, infinity, and impassibility? Might it not constitute a heavier charge than all that ever has been, or can be, urged against Unitarianism?

Fourth objection.—Unitarians proudly expect salvation as the reward of their own good works, and not from the grace of God.

To this we reply, that we expect nothing in consequence of our good works for which we have not the frequent and express warrant of the scriptures. The divine favour and blessing, here and hereafter, are repeatedly promised to all who work righteousness: "Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord." "Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him; for they shall eat the fruit of their doings." "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." "God will render to every man according to his deeds; to them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, honour, and immortality, eternal life."

Though heaven be promised to the obedient, we do not expect it as a merited, but as a gracious recompense. It is a gift, an unspeakable gift, promised on conditions, but not earned by those conditions, nor capable of being deserved by the virtues of any creature. We believe the doctrine of salvation by grace, and think that doctrine more closely connected with our principles than with any other. That it cannot be reconciled with the freeness of divine grace is one reason why we reject the popular notion of atonement.

This last-mentioned doctrine has been erroneously supposed to be the proper and only foundation of a sinner's hope toward God. The demand has often been made: If this be taken away, what remains to preserve the wounded conscience from despair? It may be replied: A multitude of encouraging promises, by prophets and apostles, in the name of a pardoning God, to all who seek his mercy. The parable of the prodigal son, whose simple pathos is so well adapted to reach and soften and console the heart; the universal proclamation of forgiveness to penitent transgressors, repeated in the discourses of Christ, confirmed by his miracles, and sealed with his blood. And what more is necessary? This is the scriptural foundation of a sinner's hope: and is it for the child of vice and error to be dissatisfied with the express declarations of Heaven, and to dictate the mode and terms of his own forgiveness and salvation?—"Nay, but, O man, who art thou, that repliest against God?"

To a mind not perplexed by the subtilties of a metaphysical theology nothing can be more evident than that salvation by grace and salvation by purchase are directly opposed. If Christ, as the representative of sinners, suffered all that was incurred by their transgressions, they cannot be themselves justly liable to punishment. If his obedience, of infinite merit, be imputed to them, they may justly claim its infinite reward. No room is left for the exercise of mercy or the display of grace. Their proper exhibition is in the free forgiveness of penitent offenders, and the bestowment of unmerited felicity; both which are provided for by the system often so undeservedly and absurdly censured for renouncing the scripture principle of salvation by grace. If there be evidence for the doctrine of satisfaction, let it be believed; but, in consistency, cease to talk of the free grace of God; leave that phrase for those whose creed holds, not the name merely, but the reality.

Calvinism, from first to last, seems a daring experiment to ascertain how far it is possible to exclude divine mercy from a religious system. It begins with representing the whole human race so united with the first man, as that one sin of his should subject all to the eternal curse of God. It proceeds to unfold a salvation sufficient for all, but restricted to a part. It tells men that they come into the world the natural enemies of God and goodness, incapable of loving the one or practising the other; and that finally they will be doomed to remediless woe in consequence of an offence committed before they existed, and of an unbelief from which they could only be rescued by supernatural interposition. And these are called doctrines of grace! But when reason is confounded, religion caricatured, and God libelled, it is trifling to complain of the perversion of language!

Fifth objection.—It is insinuated that Unitarianism relaxes the obligations of morality, and is unfavourable to a life of holiness.

This objection is not very consistent with the last, which accuses us of placing too much importance upon good works. As it is equally current, it deserves notice. If repentance and reformation be all the satisfaction which God requires of the transgressor, and if future punishment be temporary and corrective, then, it is inferred, the apparent evil of sin must be diminished, and the mind rendered more liable to the influence of temptation. This is not the genuine tendency of those opinions. They represent vice and misery, virtue and enjoyment, as inseparably connected, and consequently engage our natural desire of happiness in the constant service of virtue. It may be doubted whether the doctrine of eternal torments have greater, or even equal, efficacy with that of limited punishment, in deterring from sin by fear. There is something so repugnant to reason in the disproportion between the crime and the suffering, that it is probably seldom thoroughly believed, even by those who steadily retain it in their creeds. With divine as with human laws, a lesser punishment, which will certainly be inflicted, deters more powerfully from transgression than a greater, from which there is a chance of escaping altogether. And even supposing the operation of terror to be enfeebled, that of love is in a much greater degree strengthened. The diminution of the one is abundantly compensated by the increase of the other. Love is peculiarly the Christian principle of obedience; and the slavish fear produced by the doctrines of satisfaction and vindictive punishment must be far inferior, as a motive to virtue, to the generous affection arising from those of free forgiveness, parental chastisement, and universal love.

There is a difference between the popular and the Unitarian notions of repentance which deserves attention. In our apprehension, though it may avert the punishment of guilt, it lays no claim to the rewards of virtue. These are only to be attained by persevering obedience. Not so with the common doctrine. In the moment of repentance, or conversion, the sinner is invested with the infinite righteousness of his divine substitute, and immediately becomes, by imputation, deserving of immortal glory. Waiving the decided contradiction of this opinion in the scripture accounts of the day of judgment, which uniformly assure us that all men shall be recompensed according to their deeds, it cannot surely be contended that such a notion is favourable to the diligent pursuit of virtue, or to its progressive increase. The great business of eternity is thus supposed to be decided; and so long as the reality of the conversion is not doubted, particular sins or virtues are but dust in the scale. Eternal salvation is secured by the imputed righteousness of Christ, and personal failings or merits become comparative trifles, the infinitesimals of moral calculation, or finite quantities, which, added to or taken from infinity, leave it still the same. There is nothing at stake: the game is played and won; no place in the heart is left for that deep interest which he must feel who is "working out his salvation with fear and trembling," and who contemplates the duties and temptations of every coming day as connected with, and influencing, his future destiny.

A life of holy obedience is enforced, on Unitarian principles, by motives founded on the infinite and eternal love of Almighty God; the perfect example of Christ; the precepts and blessings of his gospel; and the prospect of a day of retribution, when wickedness shall be consigned to proportionate punishment, and sincere though imperfect virtue be rewarded with never-ending felicity—principles which are far from tending to the encouragement or toleration of licentiousness.

Sixth objection.—Unitarianism is cheerless and gloomy, and less adapted to the promotion of human happiness than the popular theology.

It is rather surprising that this notion should be so common, since it is completely founded in ignorance. As far as Unitarianism differs from other systems, it is more conducive to happiness; and this superiority requires not a long examination to be ascertained, but is discoverable at a single glance.

Complacency is one great source of enjoyment. Which tends most to the production of this pleasurable feeling,—a creed scriptural, rational, simple, commending itself to the understanding; or one filled with mysteries, and requiring a perpetual prostration of the reason, and annihilation of the best feelings of the heart? A world framed and governed in love, which the Creator calls good, and blesses; or a world for one sin of one man placed under the curse of God? An impartial providence working for universal good; or a providence regulating all things only for the welfare of the elect? Mankind capable of virtue and vice, and equally probationers for glory; or mankind totally and radically depraved, and only good by miracle? A heaven for the virtuous of every clime, race, and religion; or a heaven engrossed by a party, fenced by creeds, and narrow as a bigot's heart? The eternal dominion of vice and misery over millions of rational creatures, or the final prevalence of goodness and bliss through the whole universe of God? Can it be made a question, on which side the benevolent heart must seek for pleasure? Are there any compensating delights? Does divine benignity become more valuable by being restricted? Is personal election made blissful by others' reprobation? Will the pleasures of heaven receive a greater zest from a distant prospect of the excruciating scenes of a crowded and everlasting hell? The comparison is insulting to man, and to the God who made him.

The leading difference between the two systems which affects the present objection is, that Unitarianism teaches that every thing is for good to all; Calvinism, that every thing is for good to a part. Hence every object is made to appear in a different light; or, more accurately, by one system much is shrouded in darkness. The objects are the same: above us are the glorious sun and the bright host of heaven; beneath is the green earth robed in magnificence and beauty; around us are men thinking, feeling, acting, and engaged in every various pursuit; and we look on with pleasure; we see the workings of a good God, "of whom, and through whom, and to whom, are all things;" we rejoice in his creation; we rejoice in the progression of things, conducted by his providence, transforming evil into good, and terminating in a bright vision of boundless felicity. But seen through the dark medium of the popular creed, how changed are these objects! The loveliness of nature ceases to depict the boundless love of God; over all hangs suspended a dreadful curse; the whole race become condemned criminals; and the globe itself one mighty nursery for hell.

Topics of consolation for sufferers are much the same in all religions. None of any great efficacy is inconsistent with Unitarianism. There is one distress, to which it applies a healing balm, for which Calvinism has no remedy, or rather which Calvinism produces and aggravates. Suppose—'tis no uncommon case—a mourner weeping over the grave to which he has consigned some object of strong and lasting affection, yet one whom even his hopes venture not to rank with the inheritors of heaven; one whom many a tender tie has fastened to his heart, but whose life, perhaps prematurely closed, gave no assurance of an immediate entrance into the reward of the righteous. For this heart-stricken mourner what consolation has Calvinism to offer? Consolation!—'tis from that source that anguish comes. Ignorant of its doctrines, he might have raised his tearful eyes to the God of mercy, doubting perhaps, but not despairing, of the future. His religion interposes; brands the suggestions of nature as impious; pronounces on his lost friend, child, or parent the awful sentence of endless misery; and proffers no relief but the selfish gratification of his own safety, and the dreadful hope of being reconciled to the eternal sufferings of one most dear by their promoting the divine glory! And this is the doctrine whose professors object to the gloom and cheerlessness of that system which alone can communicate peace and resignation to his soul, by displaying his lost one purified under the corrective inflictions of divine justice, and at length restored to his embrace, worthy of his love, and of participation in his felicity!

In the opinion of many, a death-bed is the surest test, not only of the sincerity of our belief, but also of its truth.

To this test there are many objections; but they need not be urged, as Unitarianism shrinks not from its application. Often have professors of that system so lived and died as to produce the exclamation, "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace." With composure and with hope have they resigned their spirits, relying,not indeed on the doctrines of satisfaction and election, but on the promises of God, through Jesus Christ, of pardon, immortality, and heaven. The consolations of Unitarianism in a dying hour are not to be despised, for they are precisely those which supported the Apostle Paul in the near prospect of martyrdom (2 Tim. iv. 7, 8).*

The *last objection* of which our limits will allow the notice is, that Unitarianism is not the religion of the poor.

The gospel was originally preached to the poor; and it is freely granted that the religion which is not adapted to their capacities and circumstances wants one essential character of genuine Christianity. It is of some importance, therefore, to ascertain how far this objection is well founded.

There is nothing in Unitarianism itself to prevent its becoming the religion of the poor. The most important arguments in its favour are plain declarations of scripture, and direct inferences from the divine character. The system itself has one decided advantage over others, in that it is more simple and intelligible. It is therefore better adapted to the poor. The fact of its not being, at present, generally embraced by them, admits of a satisfactory explanation.

A doctrine which has been for ages lost or obscured must necessarily be revived by speculative men, and will, for a time, be confined to them. It can only by slow degrees, and after much discussion and opposition, become the religion of the multitude.

Unitarianism has not yet been extensively offered to the poor. Its friends have been obliged to struggle rather for the free and quiet profession than for the dissemination of their tenets. Their writings have been adapted to all classes; but these, of course, find their way but slowly into the hands of those who are prevented from reading much by their circumstances and prejudices. Popular preaching, the most effectual mode of ascertaining whether their faith can become that of the poor, they have but recently been enabled to employ.

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* Messrs. Bogue and Bennett, in their *History of Dissenters*, after a garbled account of the death of Dr. Priestley, assert that it "should be regarded as pronouncing the damnation of the Socinian creed." What sentence does Paul, by his total omission of their only hope in death, pronounce on the creed of Calvinists? See an excellent little tract entitled *Scrutator's Letter on the Dignified Character and Consoling Influence of Unitarianism in a Dying Hour.*

Among the lower classes are generally found the strongest prejudices; and in this case they have been carefully fomented. Our adversaries possess the public ear; and while they can successfully teach that Unitarianism is a damnable heresy, the offspring and symptom of a depraved heart, blasphemous to God and destructive to man, it is not strange that we should seldom find candid hearers or readers. These delusions are not omnipotent, but they can only be dispelled by time and labour.

It is the fact, too, that, in many instances, Unitarianism is opposed by an unfair influence. Free Inquiry is repressed, not by *legal* penalties, but by the certainty of its being followed by inconveniences and losses equally formidable. Men are made to feel that their interests and comforts are at stake, the moment they begin to think for themselves on religious subjects. Bigotry is not nice in its means for opposing and crushing heresy; and though he who has arrived at firm conviction of the truth of a reprobated system may, with the spirit of a martyr, brave the storm, it cannot be expected that such habits of bold examination should be generally cherished as must precede the substitution of one set of opinions for another.

After all, the assumed fact is but partially true. From the lower orders, especially those who have not been left wholly destitute of education, and those who have been diligent Bible-students, Unitarianism has received no inconsiderable accession of proselytes. The exertions of our Fund and Book Societies have been far from unsuccessful; and there have been many instances in which solitary individuals, some in which whole societies, with only the Bible for their guide, have emerged from popular errors, and embraced a purer faith. Every year beholds an increase of this class of Unitarians. There are enough already to show the fallacy of the objection; but if a greater number be requisite, in the opinion of those who urge it, we consign with confidence to *time* its complete refutation.

This refutation, indeed, has been already given. In the third century Unitarianism was the religion of the multitude, and Trinitarianism that of a small minority of speculative men.

The prevalence of the above objections is to be lamented, because they prevent examination. It is necessary to dispose of them before we can expect that our arguments will be attended to, and Unitarianism fairly discussed upon its own merits. They operate as strong presumptions against us; but let it not be supposed that, to a candid mind, first appearances are uniformly and decidedly against Unitarianism. There are presumptions in its favour; obvious facts, which, prior to the detailed consideration of its scriptural evidences, furnish it with the stamp and character of truth. The mention of a few of these shall conclude this discourse.

The first is its simplicity. To this quality the scriptures lay frequent claim; nature, equally the work of God, is eminently distinguished by it; and it must obviously belong to a religion wisely framed for universality. But what can be more complicated than the doctrines of Trinity in Unity and Unity in Trinity? of the union of the divine and human natures in one person? of the imputation of sin from Adam to us, and from us to Christ, and again of his righteousness to us? What nice disitnctions, what special pleadings, what metaphysical subtilties, are requisite for the proof and explanation of these notions! Will any contend that they are more intelligible than the doctrines of one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; and the forgiveness of sin upon repentance?—that the Athanasian and Nicene creeds are simpler than the Apostles'? The presumption is certainly in favour of that which he who runs may read.

2d. Its congeniality with the feelings and wishes of good men is observable. A man may submit to a religion which requires reason to be hoodwinked; but would he not prefer one intelligible and credible? He may feel obliged to believe the reception of certain doctrines essential to salvation; but would he not be gratified by the conviction, that there are good men of all opinions whom he may acknowledge as brethren and fellow-heirs of glory? He may be resigned to the eternity of vice and suffering; but would he not rejoice in the prospect of their terminating, and leaving to goodness and joy the possession of the universe? There is nothing unholy in feelings such as these: they are pure and benevolent; the voice of God within us; and a presumption that the system which gratifies, not that which crushes them, is his voice also.

3d. It may not be amiss to notice the general character of Unitarian professors and converts. That they are chiefly speculative men has been made an objection; but if withal they be men of integrity and piety, the objection becomes an argument in its favour. Unworthy motives can as little as mental weakness be coupled with the illustrious names of Locke and Newton. Those who spoke of Priestley "with no friendly voice,"* call him the amiable and upright; they might have added, the devout and zealous. The character of Lindsey is spotless; his ability as an interpreter of Scripture indubitable: and he, for conscience' sake, relinquished every earthly prospect. His controversial opponent, Robert Robinson, the first of preachers, and one of the ablest defenders of the divinity of Christ, died a Unitarian. That great and good man, Dr. Watts, the sweet singer of Israel, for many years before his death was gradually diverging from the doctrine of the Trinity, and he died an alien from the faith of his youth. The tide of conversion has uniformly flowed towards Unitarianism, bearing along many whose piety, knowledge, and goodness were most eminent, and sweeping away the ties of early association, temporal interest, and friendly connection. How can this be accounted for, if what they abjured was indeed the truth of God; what they embraced, a destructive heresy?

4th. The success of Unitarianism speaks in its favour. There are circumstances which give considerable weight to this argument. It is worth nothing when political power, enthusiasm, prejudice, or force give currency to religious opinions; but when they prevail in opposition to all these, and supported only by argument, it becomes important. Unitarianism, thus situated, has made great progress. Not only has the number of its professors been multiplied, but a mighty change has been wrought on the whole mass of its opponents, by compelling them gradually to moderate the tone and lower the standard of orthodoxy. I believe there is no instance in which, during an enlightened age, and in spite of penal laws and popular prejudices, falsehood has thus emerged from the studies of the speculative, and gradually worked its way among all classes, gaining friends from every denomination, and driving its adversaries from one position after another; "every where spoken against," yet every where erecting some trophy of partial or complete conviction.

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* The historians of Dissent mentioned in a preceding note.

The sole object of our efforts is to remove the prejudices which obstruct inquiry, and obtain full and candid examination. Let the evidences of Unitarianism be properly discussed, and its friends have no apprehensions as to the result. If a fair hearing be once obtained, the decision must be favourable. We have mighty advocates, whose voice is resistless. The mind of man pleads for us! —left to itself, it rises indignant at creeds which fetter the understanding, and narrow the heart. The word of God pleads for us!—it bears our sentiments on every page, and rarely can it be perverted or tortured into the semblance of Trinitarianism. The Heavens and the Earth plead for us!—wherever they indicate design, it is benevolent design; and never has any one deduced from their appearances a plurality of creators. The revelation of God, the reason of man, the constitution of nature, with united voice proclaim these eternal truths: THERE IS ONE GOD! and, GOD IS LOVE!

A SERMON ON FREE INQUIRY IN MATTERS OF RELIGION.

[1815.]

The following sermon was preached at Salisbury on the evening of Wednesday, 28th June 1815, after the Annual Meeting of the members of the Southern Unitarian Society; and is given to the public at the earnest request of those who were present at its delivery. The intention of the author was not to take a complete view of the subject of Free Inquiry, but to throw out such hints as might lead his hearers to think for themselves, and try received opinions fairly and boldly by the Word of God. The publication of the sermon was thought likely to promote that desirable object. The author has submitted to the judgment of his friends, and wishes their expectations may be realised.—Preface.

"Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?"
(Luke xii. 57.)

Power and prosperity have been often pernicious to the best characters,—and no wonder; for the best of religions was corrupted by success. The contrast between the peasants of Galilee and the lords of Rome, the fisherman's coat and the imperial mantle, was not greater than that between the gospel of Christ and his apostles, and the gospel of the priests of Constantine and his successors. To pass over the wide difference between his simple principles and their metaphysical speculations; his unadorned worship and their temples, robes, and ceremonies,—every one must be struck with the opposition of their views and conduct as to the individual exercise of our mental powers on religious subjects. He represented religion as a personal concern; they made it the business of the state. He did nothing in a corner; his words and works were public; he challenged, nay, implored full investigation: they veiled doctrine and worship in mystery, and repressed inquiry by pains and penalties. He uniformly sought the glory of God and the good of man; they sacrificed both to raise a spiritual throne, and bind their brows with the tiara. He refused to call fire from heaven to vindicate his insulted character, and prove his divine commission; they kindled the flames of persecution to confirm their power and satiate their revenge. He saved men's lives; they destroyed them. But, however Christianity may have been abused by bad men, and for bad purposes, it is still in itself the same; it changes not with the changes of its professors. Corruption may obscure, but shall not extinguish it. Still it survives in the sacred records with its native beauty, and all its power of evidence; still calls for the exercise of individual, independent, unbiassed search: "Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?"

Had our Lord put this question to some in later days, who, although his professed disciples, have been bitter enemies to inquiry, they would have returned an answer which even the acute and dogmatical Pharisees did not think of: they would have said that human nature was radically depraved; that they laboured under a natural and total incapacity for judging rightly; and were unable even to think a good thought, in consequence of the corruption derived from Adam; and that to qualify them for becoming acquainted with sacred truth, a miraculous change and supernatural illumination were necessary. This comes in the form of a religious objection to the practice which is, by implication, recommended in the text; and it is therefore desirable, however difficult the task, to treat it with respect.

Man is certainly feeble and erring in himself, and completely dependent upon God. Of this we have daily proofs. The most learned and able men display occasionally lamentable ignorance and imbecility. Providence has conducted babes to the knowledge of truths which philosophers have missed. Such facts should teach us caution, candour, and humility in our investigations; but they ought not to prohibit inquiry altogether. Nor is the fallibility of man to be confounded with his natural and total incapacity. We deny that incapacity, on the authority of two facts. 1st, Men who have confessedly not been the subjects of a supernatural conversion have yet attained clear and comprehensive views of divine truth, whatever be the system of doctrines on which that title is conferred; 2d, Many who profess to have undergone this new birth, and whose claims are allowed by those who deem it essential to salvation, are far inferior in knowledge to others, and have but a confused and imperfect apprehension of their own tenets. These facts will least of all be disputed by those against whom we are contending; whose conclusions against the use and power of reason in religion thus receive, on their own principles, a complete refutation.

There is a gross inconsistency in this mode of opposing religious inquiry. It is asserted that reason is depraved: and how is the assertion supported? By arguments and deductions which reason is employed to make! by texts which reason is compelled to interpret to its own condemnation! Thus this unhappy power is betrayed into suicide, and its skill directed to sharpen the weapon destined for its own destruction!

The text is the language of reproof and of regret. Of reproof, for a violated obligation; of regret, for a neglected advantage. God has made free inquiry at once the duty and the privilege of his rational creatures. Has he also made them incapable of fulfilling that duty, of enjoying that privilege? Awful indeed is our condition, if the same divine authority which says, " He that believeth not shall be condemned," also says, Ye cannot possibly examine and believe without miraculous assistance. Are such the just and merciful requirements of God? Does he thus torment and insult us by impracticable injunctions and fallacious promises? As well might he have commanded us to fly through the air, to live in the ocean, or to move the world! Duty implies power; and where the power ceases, the duty ceases.

The fact is, that inquiry, especially religious inquiry, is the proper element of man. For this his mental powers were destined. They indicate their use and sphere, as the varied conformation of inferior creatures shows where they should inhabit, and on what they should subsist. The slavery of the mind is as unnatural as that of the body. The faculties of the soul are no more formed for ignorance and blind submission than the bodily senses for silence, darkness, and confinement. These were given for exercise upon the sights and sounds of the material creation; those, on the discoveries, precepts, promises, and denunciations of the word of God. We should no more bear the chains of prejudice than those of vassalage: they are more degrading, because voluntary.

As in nature, so in the gospel, there is nothing to obstruct, but every thing to encourage, the exercise of free inquiry.

Christianity is founded on reason, and only requires belief after examination of its evidences. That it is professed by our parents and taught by our authorised instructors may be sufficient ground for the credence of a child, but ought not to be so for that of a man. By the prevalence of this passive and hereditary faith, the grossest superstitions maintain their sway, and number their subject nations. This distributes and divides religions by degrees of latitude and longitude; and, in Christian countries, makes men first nominal professors, then hypocrites, then infidels. "To be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you" is a duty now, and one which is not attended with formidable difficulties to any person. The most recondite arguments in support of our religion are so abridged and familiarised as to be accessible and intelligible to all; if not in the multifarious labours of Lardner, at least in the luminous pages of Paley or of Belsham. Acquaintance with these or similar works is surely a Christian duty, that our faith may not stand "in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

To the attentive reader the gospel is its own witness. He will discover traces of a divine origin in almost every page: in the correspondence of New-Testament history with Old-Testament prophecy; in a morality of unequalled purity; in rational and sublime views of the divine perfections; in the originality and perfection of the character of Jesus; and in the simplicity, candour, essential agreement, and circumstantial differences, of his biographers.

The doctrines of Christianity should be learned by personal examination of the scriptures. Interpretations have no authority, nor ought they to be made standards of faith. When we inquire after religious truth, one sends us to the decisions of popes and councils, another to the thirty-nine articles, and another to the Assembly's Catechism. And what are these but clouds which intercept the light of divine revelation? Were their framers our proxies? The intellectual part of religion will not, any more than the moral, admit of substitution; nor should we trust those to think for us who cannot also be devout and good in our stead, and bear our responsibility at the great day of retribution.

The gospel possesses divine authority and universal intelligibility. Of all the creeds which have been made its substitutes, is there one that has been distinguished by a voice from heaven proclaiming, "He that believeth shall be saved"? Are any of them so easy to be understood as the discourses of Christ? Let not what is fallible and obscure be preferred to that which is unerring and explicit. It is better to study religion in the gospel than in the purest and simplest human statements; for to that must they ultimately be brought, to fix their sense, and ascertain their truth.

Many shrink from canvassing the doctrines of religion themselves, and discourage the practice in others, from an ill-founded fear of its diminishing the veneration in which they ought to be held. They forget that examination is necessary to determine what doctrines deserve our respect. We cannot be said to believe a proposition unless we comprehend its meaning and have weighed its evidences. Faith without understanding is the trick of priestcraft. Mystery has been a good shield for superstition, and has warded off many a heavy blow. How many have been deterred from a rational examination of the scripture doctrine on the object of worship, by being told that the nature of Deity is too profound for human comprehension! We know but little about the nature of the sun: but cannot any one, not born blind, determine whether one sun or three shine in the firmament? As easily may any man of common sense see whether three divine persons are revealed in the scriptures, without presuming to fathom infinity. 'Tis a question of fact, not of science. So are all the great subjects of theological controversy. Whether Jesus of Nazareth was a man, or the Lord God Almighty; whether the forgiveness of sin be free or purchased; whether the love of God be partial or universal,—are plain and important questions, which the New Testament, if it be indeed a divine revelation, cannot have left unanswered to the honest and diligent, though unlearned, inquirer. The truth, on these interesting topics, cannot be rendered less dear or venerable by having obtained it ourselves from the sacred records.*

The New Testament sanctions free inquiry by express declaration and earnest injunction, by blame of its neglect and commendation of its exercise. "Search the scriptures." "One is your master, even Christ." "Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?" "The Bereans were more noble than those of Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." "I speak as unto wise men: judge ye what I say." "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God." Christianity feels itself safe in the hands of sincere inquirers of every class, and courts their examination. It was not formed to be the pedestal of priestly arrogance or political cunning, nor will it be so, till its original symmetry be destroyed, its original brightness lost. The Bible is professedly the gift of God to all his rational creatures, and who shall dare to interrupt his bounties? The attempt is vain, as it is impious. Men will discover, and, discovering, will exercise their right. Who shall raise his feeble mound and command the waters of the ocean not to visit this or that shore? who stretch forth his hand and stay the sun's beams, that they shine not on this or that province? The ocean will flow, and the sun will shine, and truth will call into exercise the rational powers of man.

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* "It ought by all means to be remembered that profound learning and acute metaphysical subtilty are by no means necessary to settle the important question concerning the person of Christ. The inquiry is into a plain matter of fact, which is to be determined, like any other fact, by its specific evidence,—the evidence of plain, unequivocal testimony; for judging of which no other qualifications are requisite than a sound understanding and an honest mind. Who can believe that the decision of the great question whether Jesus of Nazareth is the true God, and the creator and governor of the world, depends upon a critical knowledge of the niceties of the Greek article? With equal reason might it be maintained, that no person can know any thing of the history of Greece who is not perfect in the metres of the Greek dramatic writers. Who ever heard of a juryman being challenged because he was not a good grammarian? The incarnation of a God, the incarceration of the Creator of the world in the body of a helpless, puling infant, is a fact the credit of which must rest, like that of all other facts, not upon grammatical subtilties, but upon evidence, direct, presumptive, or circumstantial, upon the validity of which every person of common sense is competent to decide."—BELSHAM'S *Calm Inquiry*.

The texts just quoted are the charter of the Christian's rights: they proclaim "the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free." Nobly was that liberty vindicated at the Reformation; but vainly, unless with the possession of the Bible we also gain the power of interpreting it each one for himself. If by the plea of antiquity, of mystery, of common acceptation, or legal establishment, any doctrine be sheltered from our investigation, we are "again entangled with the yoke of bondage."

The prevalence of a spirit of inquiry and discussion is deprecated by some, on account of its supposed pernicious consequences, amongst which they especially apprehend the destruction of unity of sentiment, dissension, and change. Let us consider these objections.

Free Inquiry will destroy unity of opinion in religion. But does this unity now exist? Think, or not think, still people are divided, and will be divided even by their prejudices. Countries have their religions, religions their sects, and sects their subdivisions. The classification of religious opinions is now not less difficult than that of stars or plants. It is scarcely possible to increase the diversity; and if there be such things as truth and evidence, free inquiry would probably diminish the evil, if indeed it be rightly called an evil.

Did God ever intend that strict unity of sentiment should prevail among rational creatures? Variety seems to be a principle of his government. Thousands of stars spangle the firmament: shine they with the same brightness? Millions of flowers adorn the earth: glow they with the same colours? A profusion of shrubs, plants, and trees diversifies our hills and plains: present they the same appearances of stem or of leaf, of blossom or of fruit? Crowds of living beings people air, earth, and sea: their forms are not more different than their habits and enjoyments. In all the multitudes of human creatures we search in vain for an identity of shape, features, voice, talents, or circumstances. Why should we expect in religion a uniformity which can be found nowhere else in the whole universe of God?

Free Inquiry is an enemy to peace; and is supposed to be the parent of confusion and every evil work. When Servetus published his work on the divine Unity, Melancthon is said to have lamented the revival of a controversy which had been the cause of so much mischief and bloodshed. Was this lamentation just? Was it owing to religious controversy that, in the fourth and fifth centuries, Athanasians and Arians by turns expelled, persecuted, and slew each other? No; but to pride, revenge, and ambition. It was not the spread of inquiry, but the endeavour to crush it, that did the mischief. As either party was triumphant, they endeavoured to destroy the principle which in adversity they advocated. For to free inquiry its enemies are sometimes obliged to do homage. When driven from power, they need its aid, and then they assert its right, and magnify its use. And it befriends even them; for though none should have a liberty to persecute others, yet all ought to enjoy freedom of conscience.

Let us be candid. There is a peace which inquiry does not promote. It is hostile to that stupid lethargy of soul, which knows not the throbs of passion because it is insensible to feeling. Exemption dearly purchased! Hierarchies have quenched those scintillations of mind, those clashings of mighty spirits, by which truth was generally elicited, and have substituted a cold and ignorant assent to established formularies. Yes, they have peace!—the peace of the stone, which knows no sorrow because incapable of sensation; the peace of slavery, when men are silent because they dare not speak; the peace of the wilderness, where all is gloom and horror, stillness and desolation; the peace of the churchyard, where corpse wars not with corpse, where no arm is raised, for all are nerveless, where every tongue is mute, every eye dim, every heart cold,—and all fast mingling into one mass of corruption!

Free Inquiry is feared as the harbinger of change, both in politics and religion. Our age has witnessed excesses connected with its name. They arose not from cherishing but restraining its exercise. To coerce the mind of man is a futile and dangerous attempt. As anarchy in states, so wildness in speculation and scepticism, or capricious change in religion, is to be ascribed, not to freedom, but to oppression, which, by aiming at impracticable restrictions, produces, such is the constitution of our nature, a strong and often dreadful reaction. Cherish man with care and kindness, and he will be content and faithful; make him a slave, load him with chains, drive him to labour

> "With stripes which Mercy with a bleeding heart
> Weeps when she sees inflicted on a beast,"

and if he burst his fetters, he will probably become fierce, bloody, and tyrannical. Liberty is the bulwark of good government; and pure religion has no better friend than free inquiry. If that point to change, either in the creed of an individual or in that of a community, 'tis a sign that change is needed. And what change can be effected by the fearless, diligent, unbiassed examination of the scriptures, which should startle an honest and benevolent mind? Who would not change a detected error for a discovered truth, blind submission for enlightened obedience, the superstition of ignorance for the devotion of knowledge, and the inventions of man for the word of God? Whose fault is it, if changes such as these be fatal to the eternity of established creeds and ceremonies?

Whatever be the evils, real or imaginary, attributed to the practice we are recommending, they can never be conclusive against what is allowed and commanded of God. From his decisions there is no appeal; and it is not for us to say that he has conferred a privilege or enjoined a duty which is inconsistent with the well-being of society. It is easier to ascertain the dictates of scripture than to make an accurate calculation of consequences; and when ascertained, they are final and decisive, whatever be the consequences; for the revealed will of God, and not our notion of present expediency, is the Christian ground of moral obligation. That obligation would remain, though, in our view, accompanied by no advantage, but fraught with dangers. There is a pleasure, however, though it is not essential to the validity of our argument, in being able to show that apprehensions of evil results are unfounded, while we have every reason to indulge anticipations of speedy and extensive utility.

Free Inquiry is friendly to devotion. By purifying and exalting our conceptions of the character of God, it disposes the mind to veneration, love, and confidence; and our homage becomes less unworthy of him when we "sing his praises with understanding." The fervour of devotion, the pleasure of obedience, must increase in proportion as we pass from the worship of an unknown or terrific God to that of the Universal Father. The sacrifices of error and enthusiasm are not those with which he is well pleased. To the prejudiced, the superstitious, and the unthinking, Inquiry, like Paul at Athens, cries, "Whom ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you." As we know more of Infinite Perfection, we shall obey with greater facility the command of Christ: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, with all thy mind and with all thy strength."

The faithful discharge of any duty cannot be unfavourable to the general interests of morality; especially when that duty, as in the present instance, is closely connected with all others. To *judge what is right* is an important step towards doing what is right. Experience loudly proclaims the utility of education, and great efforts are made to render it universal. What is morally advantageous to the child will not be prejudicial to the adult. To make men wiser is commonly to make them better; and this result is most probable when the knowledge is self-acquired, and has for its objects the doctrines of revelation. The promise of Christ to those who persevered in attention to his instructions was, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

The bigotry which estranges good men, of different opinions on religious subjects, from each other's esteem and affection is principally to be attributed to a practical belief in the infallibility of sects or leaders. It will gradually retire as Free Inquiry advances. The well-informed of all denominations are the most liberal. Those who are most forward to censure persons of a different persuasion, and even to pronounce on their eternal destiny, have generally received the creed of a party without examination, and only read the scriptures under the influence of notions whose truth they will not suffer themselves to discuss or doubt. There is a bigotry of the creed and a bigotry of the heart. Candid Inquiry is fatal to both; and it frequently destroys the latter in those who do not sufficiently pursue it to rid themselves of the former.

A general endeavour among Christians thoroughly to understand the religion which they profess would be a happy presage of the return of its original purity and its original success. Christianity would soon be distinguished from the absurdities which have usurped and disgraced its name, and impeded its progress. Again would it appear "worthy of all acceptation," and great would be its triumphs over prejudice, scepticism, and opposition. By restoring the simplicity and credibility of the gospel, we do more towards extending its belief and influence than by sending forth crowds of missionaries to preach a system which some will abhor as idolatrous, and others despise as irrational.

Let every one, then, attend to this often disputed, but still oftener neglected, duty; attend to it promptly and habitually. Let us all value as our birthright, claim as our dearest privilege, and exercise as a sacred obligation, Free Inquiry!—Free Inquiry, the friend of Christianity, the precursor of knowledge and of truth, the parent of liberality, virtue, and devotion! Free Inquiry, the source of improvement in every science, especially in theology; at whose inspiring voice religion awoke from her long torpor, spurned the chains of papal tyranny, and called on the nations to read the gospel and behold their God! Free Inquiry, that even now stands, like the angel which John saw in vision, with one foot on the sea, one on the dry land, lifts a mighty arm to heaven, and swears "by Him that liveth for ever and ever, that time"—the time of ignorance, error, superstition, and idolatry—"shall be no more!"

THE SPREAD OF UNITARIANISM A BLESSING TO SOCIETY:

A Sermon preached at the Unitarian Chapel in Artillery Lane, London, on Wednesday, 28th of May 1817, *before the friends and supporters of the Unitarian Fund.*

[1817.]

"And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; there stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us" (Acts xvi. 9).

This vision occasioned the introduction of Christianity into Europe.

I shall not occupy your time with any consideration of the question which commentators on this passage have discussed, as to who or what this man of Macedonia was? whether he was an individual personally known to the apostle; the tutelar angel or genius of the province; or merely one indicating his country by his garb and speech? I adduce the conduct of Paul on this occasion, and I might for the same purpose adduce his whole history after his conversion, the conduct of all the other apostles, that of the primitive disciples in general, and of Christ himself, as an example to us, to excite our zeal, direct our efforts, and strengthen our hopes; to vindicate the *Unitarian Fund* in the means which it employs, and in the objects which it aspires to accomplish.

It does not clearly appear by the narrative whether this vision was natural or supernatural; nor is it of any importance to the argument which I shall build upon its results. That Paul was frequently directed by his glorified master, or by heavenly communications, in the course which it was best for him to pursue in the propagation of Christianity, is indisputable. This might be one of those directions. At the same time, there is nothing improbable, nor inconsistent with Luke's account, in the supposition that the incessant workings of his zealous and benevolent mind should influence his slumbers, and embody themselves in the forms of idolatrous people supplicating his presence and instructions for their salvation. The observer of the human mind must have noticed many analogous facts, and will readily conceive how the thoughts of one who was occupied all the day in pleading the cause of his religion against bigotry, vice, and polytheism should flow of themselves during sleep in the same channels, and fancy, in her unchecked dominion, present new objects of benevolence, and wider fields for labour. His attention thus excited, he would estimate justly the prospect of success, and follow with ardour the leadings of benevolent impulse or divine inspiration to untried scenes of conflict with superstition and false philosophy, to fresh triumphs of Christianity over the pride and servility, the vices and errors, the ignorance and obstinacy, of mankind.

Desiring that our God and Father should be worshiped according to his revealed will; that the instructions of his Son should be received in their genuine simplicity; and that our fellow-creatures should share with us in the privileges of pure Christianity,—we unite, in holy emulation of apostolic example, to help those whose best interests we think we are able to promote. Our proceedings are objected to; and my reply is, that the same objections might have been urged against that enterprise of Paul which gave Christianity to Europe, and that we have, in substance, the same vindication.

Trinitarianism is the established religion of our country, and is therefore deemed by some not a proper object of attack. You have toleration, they say, therefore be quiet. Be thankful for the liberty granted you, and dissent in peace and silence from institutions sanctioned by antiquity and authority. And why did not Paul reverence the establishments of Athens and of Ephesus? Why did he not accept in passive gratitude the connivance or toleration under which he might have worshiped the God of his fathers through Jesus Christ, without disturbing the authorised religion of every province into which he set his foot? He thought that truth, whether tolerated or persecuted, was better for men than established error.

Trinitarianism is popular. It is the religion of the poor as well as of the rich; of the enthusiastic as well as of the mercenary; of those who go with a multitude as well as of those who follow a court. Why assail so massy a fabric? What impression can be made upon a nation? And did Paul enter a city where he was not liable to be stoned by an idolatrous mob or a Jewish mob? Did *he* go where pride and interest, habit and feeling, education and prejudice, were not combined against him? Was not polytheism inwoven not only with the government, but with the recollections, customs, pleasures, and occupations of all classes? He did not shrink from the unequal conflict, for his was the cause of Truth and Righteousness.

We are accused of violence. We tell the truth at once, and call bad things by their right names: we do not gradually undermine old superstitions; nor gently and cautiously wean men from their errors, and draw them towards a purer faith. By facts it may be proved that, though bold and decided, you have not been intemperate. But I would inquire of these reasoners, whether Paul softly and diffidently begged leave to differ from the hearers he collected round him; or obscurely insinuated principles which, if well reasoned upon, might hereafter be found inconsistent with some of their received opinions; or endeavoured silently to pave the way for their becoming more enlightened; or cautiously hinted facts, in due time to be followed by others, which would tend in a generation or two, perhaps, to christianise the well-informed, who might afterwards influence the vulgar. No. He plainly and broadly stated, and forcibly advocated, a religion in many particulars directly opposed to theirs; he told them to arise from the dead, and Christ should give them light; and thus he brought them at once, without a long, progressive twilight, out of darkness into day.

It is sometimes asserted that Unitarianism is fit only for cultivated minds; and that the vulgar need something which appeals more powerfully to the senses and the passions. Were this assertion well founded, I for one should think it fatal to Unitarianism, and would abjure the system as unchristian: for the gospel was preached by its author to the poor, and was designed for the poor of all ages and countries. But we appeal to the conduct of Paul. Instigated by the circumstance recorded in the text, he went to proclaim a spiritual God to those whose feelings had long been interested in deities with human shape and passions; to unfold a religion without pomp to those whose eyes had been fed with splendid temples, vestments, and processions; to establish a worship without ceremony amongst those who were wont to adore with sacrifices blazing on the altar, with incense floating in fragrant clouds upon the air, and all that could impose on, dazzle, or enchant the senses; and to awe, restrain, and animate, by motives drawn from invisible realities, a multitude educated in unblushing sensuality.

Other ground of objection is occasionally taken; differences are overlooked; and it is seriously inquired whether there can be any comparison between the promulgation of Christianity and the diffusion of a particular view of the gospel amongst those who are already Christians? between making converts from Judaism or Heathenism to Christianity, and from the popular sects to Unitarianism? Let us not be deceived by names. The most opposite things may be designated by the same term; as *mystery,* which sometimes means the explanation of a secret,* and sometimes a secret which admits of no explanation. However rightly included under the common appellation of Christianity, Unitarianism and Trinitarianism are in fact different religions. They are opposed as to the object of worship, the motives to virtue, the means of salvation, and the nature of punishment. The difference was undoubtedly greater between the doctrines which Paul taught and those of idolaters; but with regard to the pious Jews, whom it was a main object with him and his coadjutors to proselyte, it will admit a question whether the difference was so important. They adored the same One God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and anticipated a retributory hereafter. When, therefore, I hear, in connection with divine worship, of the absurdity of being zealous about speculative points, on which good men may differ, I ask why the apostles were sent to christianise those whose worship was pure, who expected a future state of rewards and punishments, and whose characters were eminently holy? Is the acknowledged piety and virtue of many Trinitarians a better reason for not attempting to lead them to a more scriptural faith and worship, than the piety and virtue of Cornelius and

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* Revelation i. 20.

Lydia, of Aquila and Priscilla, and Apollos, and many others, was for the apostles to let them alone in so good a way? There could be no doubt of their salvation, and yet what arduous efforts were made for their conversion!

Exertions for the spread of truth require sacrifices which some may not feel it their duty to make, and excite bad passions which, it is said, we should suffer to repose in peace. And what sacrifices can we make? Did we call you to the probable loss of property, liberty, or life, they might be spoken of as formidable; though these did not deter Paul. And if maliguant opposition be excited by our zealously pleading the cause of truth, where rests the culpability? Wherever it may rest, you reply, society must feel the evil. True; so it did when Paul came proselyting out of Asia into Europe; so it did when He preached who came, "not to bring peace on earth, but a sword;" so it must whenever old and favourite errors are assailed. Is it therefore better to leave the world in darkness? They judged and acted differently.

I am not unaware that, in the opinion of many, this parallel is destroyed by the fact of Paul's possessing miraculous powers and a divine commission. Let us inquire how far this impairs the force of his example, and makes of no obligation in the one case that which in the other was an imperious duty.

The duty and the power of doing good are commensurate. But the power of diffusing truth is not identical with that of working miracles. The latter might be an important accessory to the former, but was by no means essential to it. Paul and other apostles made converts at places where it is not recorded that any miracles were wrought. Nor did signs from heaven always produce conviction. The possession of such a power might inspire the hope of greater success than we can anticipate; but we still have many weapons of apostolic warfare, which were "mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strongholds." Shall we refuse to wield them, because one part of the celestial armoury is now inaccessible? Because we cannot work miracles, shall we not reason and persuade? Because we cannot open the eyes of the blind, shall we not do our best to give mental illumination? Because we cannot call down fire from heaven, shall we refuse to kindle on earth the flame of pure devotion? Because we cannot do every thing, shall we therefore lay it down as a principle that we ought to do nothing? A generous man, methinks, should reason differently, and resolve, if but feeble, to put forth the whole of his strength, and if his means be limited, to employ them all.

But Paul had a divine mission to propagate Christian truth, and we have none. Have you not?—no commission to do good? Man, search thy heart, and thou wilt find one there, or that heart is not impressed with Christian principles, nor throbs responsive even to nature's dictates. No commission to do good? What, then, is thy origin and business, thy religion and thy destiny? By what unknown God wert thou formed, that he made thee for some other purpose than to bless thy fellows? What concern hast thou in the world, that doing good forms no part of it? What religion hast thou studied, that teaches thee freely to receive, but not to give? And whither art thou going beyond the grave, that for thy heaven the qualification of active beneficence is unnecessary?

We do not suppose, however, that this backwardness arises from a reluctance to do good, but from a doubt whether our efforts be productive of that desirable result. It shall be my object, therefore, to prove that *the spread of Unitarianism is a blessing to society.*

Much might be done towards establishing this proposition, without employing arguments in which the truth of Unitarianism is assumed; but I shall not separate these from others which imply it, because it is chiefly with reference to those who believe with us, but do not act with us, that our subject is either interesting or appropriate on the present occasion.

There are cases in which the good resulting from this institution is similar, and even equal, to that accomplished by the original preaching of Christianity when most efficacious. It causes the gospel to be preached to those who are not only poor, but profligate; who are heaping up crime and infamy and wretchedness for themselves in this life, and the righteous judgments of God in the world to come. It is the means of alarming their consciences, subduing their hearts, reforming their lives; of making them happy in themselves, useful to society, and honourable professors of pure religion. It is comparatively a trifling consideration that such events—and extended efforts increase the probability of their frequent recurrence—wipe off a calumnious reproach from your system; they do what is infinitely more important,—they convert sinners from the error of their ways, save souls from death, and cover multitudes of sins.

Others are rescued from the infidelity which they were fast approaching, or into which they had been actually driven, by disgust with the common statements of Christian doctrine. Many in the humbler walks of life have minds too acute and powerful to be bandaged by mystery or fettered with absurdity. They see the incompatibility of reason with the faith propounded to them; and, unwilling to sacrifice either, remain in painful perplexity, or plunge into scepticism. You save them from that hopeless abyss, where no light from heaven penetrates to explain the present or gild the future. In exchange for uncertain speculations on a continued or revived existence, or the dreary anticipation of endless night and death, you give the sure and certain hope of a resurrection, and to virtue the glorious prospect of a blessed immortality. Whether or not the shipwreck of faith has been also that of a good conscience, it cannot be denied that in either case an inestimable benefit is conferred both on the individual and on society.

How much of what passes for religion among those who, without examination, follow the practices of their fathers is mere heartless formality; a round of ceremonies, without devotion, without meaning, without influence; in which the mind is unexercised, and the heart uninterested! Is it not well that such should be excited by zealous exertion to a more lively concern about that which is all-important? that into this dust of the earth should be breathed the breath of life, that it may become a living soul? that this clay should be animated by fire from heaven? Even the warfare of controversy is better than this death of indifference and formality; for in the shock of opinions, not only may truth be elicited, but its moral and vivifying powers be called into action on the mind and heart. The spread of rational religion amongst persons of this description is the transformation of mechanism into mind, of statues in an idol's temple into living worshipers of the living God.

If Unitarianism be considered as displacing in its advance the doctrines which are most popular, viz. those of Calvinism and Arminianism, jointly claiming the name of Evangelical, its progress will appear to be eminently beneficial. The proper estimate of the importance and happiness of this change may be ascertained by tracing it first in the individual, and afterwards in its remoter influence in the community at large.

The spread of Unitarianism is the spread of truth. Is it assuming too much to say that truth is valuable irrespective of its results? that it is better for men's ideas on moral and religious subjects to correspond with than be opposed to realities? Or is it an unwarrantable assertion, that every revealed truth is designed and adapted for the production of its appropriate moral effect? On either assumption, its diffusion must be a useful work. And which of them will be disputed? The first is borne out by the common sense of mankind. The worth of truth has been often and loudly proclaimed. Its pursuit is the labour, its discovery the recompense, its diffusion the glory, of the philosopher. The very notion of a divine revelation supposes that religious truth has an intrinsic value; that its possession is a blessedness; or that, if not good in itself, it is at least the cause of good, by a direct tendency to promote the virtue and happiness of its believers. The author of our religion and his first followers uniformly spoke and wrote on the presumption that communicating truth was doing good. And if this was ever the case, is it not now, when so dense a cloud has veiled its light? What part of Christianity has not been contaminated with error? The notion of plenary inspiration has ascribed to the unerring spirit the inconsistencies of honest but fallible witnesses, and made him responsible for the memories, the arguments, and the philosophy of mortals. For the one God we are presented with a plural being, and taught to adore a Deity in him who died on Calvary. Salvation by grace is narrowed into purchased redemption by vicarious suffering; faith is made a mysterious and supernatural principle, good works are ascribed to miracle, and futurity is transformed into a scene of arbitrary favour and vindictive infliction. Falsehood has followed truth through the whole round of Christian doctrine, perverting, corrupting, and overturning. And will he whose mind you disincumber of this mass of error, even on the impossible supposition that he gains no new impulse to goodness, no fresh spring of enjoyment, not thank you for the deliverance? Can the substitution of truth, simplicity, and rationality, for these mysterious, contradictory, and bewildering opinions, be other than an era in the mental history of man, to which he will continually refer with complacency, and for which he will bless the friendly agency by which it was effected?

The spread of Unitarianism is the spread of knowledge. Error and ignorance, truth and knowledge, are connected and generally flourish together. Protestant countries are commonly superior to Catholic, not only as to the tenets of their faith and the eremonies of their worship, but in the degree of information diffused over the population. A candid observer, without entering into the truth of our opinions, will, I think, assign a similar superiority to Unitarian societies and professors over others. And while this is a collateral argument in favour of those opinions, it is also a distinct blessing conferred by their propagation. A sect indeed with less of passion and popularity than one class of its opponents, and less of temporal advantage and authority than another, that can only win its way by argument, must needs, wherever it goes, extend the information both of those who receive and of those who reject its doctrines. It sends all to their Bibles; it produces inquiry, examination, and discussion; and has already made popular a world of information before peculiar to the learned student.

The spread of Unitarianism is the spread of pure worship. I define pure worship by the authority of Christ: "The *true worshipers* shall worship THE FATHER in spirit and in truth." This was not more applicable to Jewish as opposed to Samaritan worship, than it is to Unitarian as opposed to Trinitarian. Whoever be the other persons elevated to divine honours, those are, according to Christ, the "true worshipers" who confine their homage to the Father. Mr. Lindsey therefore called Trinitarian worship Christian idolatry. And if idolatry be the worship of a Deity in a defined and visible form, such is that of Christ; if it be the adoration of a created and inferior being, such is that of Christ; if it be that of a mere creature of the imagination, such also is that of Christ—for the being adored in the minds of Trinitarians under that title is not he whose character, pretensions, conduct, and death are described in the gospels; nor could such a one as they represent him to be, at once dependent and independent, omniscient and ignorant, man and God, ever exist. False worship does not cease to be idolatry by its object existing only to the mental perception;* and a reference to the language of the prophets will show that its evil did not consist merely in the accompanying ceremonies of disgraceful and cruel nature, but in the transfer to others of that honour which is due to Jehovah alone. In fact, whether, if Unitarianism be true, Trinitarianism is idolatry, however debated amongst ourselves, is scarcely a question with our opponents. The ablest defenders of their system have asserted that, if we be right, they are idolaters.† The question is not quite a verbal one; but if it were, it is still no unimportant good, in the view of a pious man, that devotion is freed from the enthralment of mystery and superstition, and restored to her natural companions, truth, reason, and simplicity: that religious services are brought back to the standard of scripture: that men's hearts are rightly tuned to heavenly love and worship, and their affections, confidence, gratitude, prayers, and praises restored to him who is alone our God and Father.

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* "Suppose an old Briton, one of your fathers, about two thousand years ago, to have fallen blind, and to have lost the use of his limbs, so that he could neither see nor feel the parish idol; yet if he, lying in his bed, or sitting over his fire, remembered the form of the idol, and felt respect for it in his heart, should we not have reason to say he was an idolater? Now this may be your case; for if you think of God *under any form*, and respect that form as God, though you cannot produce any likeness of the form in your mind, yet this idea of God will become a veil thrown over your understanding, and will prevent your entertaining just notions of Almighty God. This you must lay aside if you desire to know God."—ROBINSON'S *Village Sermons*.

† "If it be indeed true that, with all our professions of piety and obedience to God, we are daily violating the first principle of religious obligation, and giving to any other being the honour which the Most High requires for himself alone, it must be admitted that our error is far from being innocent, and that our practice is, in this instance, heinously criminal and offensive in the sight of heaven."—Dr. SMITH'S *Vindication of the Adoration of our Lord Jesus Christ from the Charge of Idolatry*.

"Either Jesus Christ is truly and properly God, or his worshipers are guilty of idolatry."—ROBINSON'S *Plea for the Divinity of Christ*.

"Such divine glory and worship we are obliged to yield him (Christ) because he is the Son of God, one in essence, and therefore equal in majesty with his Father: were it not so, it would be injury to God, and sacrilege to do it."—BARROW.

The spread of Unitarianism is that of liberty and liberality. You free men from a mental and a social bondage, often found intolerable. No other sect exists without the sanction of a creed. In no other party can men exercise full liberty of thought and speech. Nowhere else is there so much actual diversity of opinion, with so little evil in consequence of diversity. We differ as to the preëxistence of Christ, his miraculous conception, a separate state, and a variety of topics, but without schisms, quarrels, persecutions, or excommunications. Surely every friend of inquiry, freedom, and peace, must rejoice in the prevalence of a religion which possesses this amiable, practical superiority, which alone has the spirit of that declaration, "One is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren."

It has been contended that liberality is not so much a principle as the temper in which principles are held, and consequently that men of any opinions may be either liberal or illiberal. This seems not quite correct. Liberality is the practical conviction that men of other opinions may be sincere, and good, and heirs of heaven. It is founded on the belief that "in every nation," and every party, "he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted with him." But this is a Unitarian tenet, which those who make faith in certain creeds essential to salvation do, in fact, deny. How can a man be liberal, who is firmly convinced that adding one to, or taking one from, his dozen of essential dogmas will for ever exclude from happiness? who believes that those who have not undergone what he calls regeneration, even when they do "things which God commands, and of good use both for themselves and others," are sinful?* And what if goodness of heart, or general improvement, now and then force an inconsistent liberality; is it not far better to secure and extend it by liberal principles?

No longer deterred from examining doctrines by the terrors of damnation, nor from communicating his doubts or discoveries by the brand of heresy, man learns to think with freedom and with impartiality. He can inquire on every subject without apprehension; he can try, reject, or accept; select or combine, with no restraints save those of evidence and truth; he can hear, and speak, and read freely whatever may be necessary for the formation of his opinions, without furnishing thereby evidence on which a social inquisition may pronounce his banishment from the hearts of his friends. How favourable such a state to vigour and expansion of intellect; to dignity and simplicity of character; to social enjoyment; to the discovery of truth and circulation of knowledge not only in religious, but in political and scientific inquiries; to the production of enlightened, bold, and generous men, who possess themselves and diffuse around them the noblest blessings!

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* *Assembly's Confession*, c. xvi. § 7.

The spread of Unitarianism is the spread of virtue. When a Calvinist or an Arminian becomes a Unitarian, what motive to goodness does he lose? What palliation for sin does he acquire? He no longer thinks his nature radically and totally depraved, inveterately hostile to, and thoroughly incapable of, all good; but will this make him vicious? He has ceased to think every act of moral obedience the result of supernatural agency upon his mind; will this induce him to relax his efforts? He is not now persuaded perhaps that a malignant spirit of wondrous power has access to his mind, and continually tempts him to evil; will he therefore more readily excuse himself in sinning? Will connecting salvation with holiness make him more careless of good works than when he ascribed it to faith alone? Can a very diminished estimate of the efficacy of a death-bed repentance render him more liable to postpone the season of reformation and exertion? Or will he have less personal righteousness, because he has ceased to rely on imputed righteousness as his passport to heaven? Let an unprejudiced looker-on answer these questions—and say, if he can, that by diffusing Unitarianism we are not advancing the interests of virtue.

There are but two inducements to goodness of which our opponents can with any plausibility assert that they are weakened or destroyed by conversion from their opinions to ours. These are—love to Christ as an incarnate God working our redemption by his death; and the fear of *eternal* punishment as the meed of sin. Not to insist on the fact that, even were these relinquished, there would be gained a more than ample compensation, it may be observed that the latter is wholly out of the question; for the believers in a system which teaches that they cannot finally fall from grace, and that their salvation is secure, however they may terrify the unconverted by threatenings of endless misery, cannot themselves be influenced by its apprehension. United by faith with their great substitute, there is for them no hell. The motive of fear becomes a far more powerful principle of action when, rejecting the doctrines of certain salvation by imputed righteousness, and of endless misery for the reprobate, they believe in personal responsibility and proportionate punishment. Future suffering then becomes an evil which they may incur, and must labour to avoid.

Supreme affection must needs have an undivided object. We feel towards Jesus all that is due to the first of created benefactors; we experience the moral influence which scripture assigns to loving him who died for us; and if it be still urged that we cannot love him as God, we reply, that distributing the Deity into three persons destroys, by dividing, that love to God which is enjoined as the first of duties and mightiest of motives. The convert to Unitarianism condenses into one intense emotion the devout and grateful and admiring feelings which before were frittered away amongst the different persons, characters, and offices of his Trinity; he beholds a lovelier Being than ever before met his contemplation; one who combines all excellences that he then distributed, and whose universal love excites a generous emotion unknown to the selfish gratitude of the elect: in the Saviour he sees an elder brother, whose example he may follow, whose reward participate; in futurity he expects a retribution where he has to hope or fear the results of his actions here; and whatever may be the virtues of some Trinitarians, it must generally be the fact, that by producing this change of opinion you improve the heart and character.

The spread of Unitarianism is the spread of happiness. The genuine consolations and enjoyments of Christianity are not felt in less perfection in our system than in any other. We rejoice in deliverance from mental darkness by the light of truth; we find support in our sufferings and sorrows, from declarations of the love and providence of God; to us, as well as to others, come his promises of the forgiveness of sins in all their soothing efficacy; and over the terrors of death and the grave are we made triumphant by the hope of immortality given us in Christ Jesus. These are the blessings conferred on man by revelation, and which we vindicate by preserving pure the principles on which they rest, from the intermixture of tenets whose tendency is gloomy and horrible. The corruptions of Christianity have a withering power on human happiness. A few examples may suffice to show that sometimes to its believers Calvinism is a curse.*

A mother weeping over the corpse of her infant applies for consolation to her minister, and asks, with trembling anxiety, if she may be assured of its salvation? He is silent!—He knows not whether it was one of the elect.

A hearer of Evangelical preaching, as it is called, is convinced that without a total change, which he has not experienced, and which no efforts of his can accomplish, he is lost for ever. He waits to be wrought upon in vain, and broods in helplessness and anguish over his unavoidable, eternal, miserable destiny.

Another, buoyed up with confidence from having, as he imagines, experienced this transformation, yields to temptation; and staggered in his hopes, ponders in dreadful uncertainty on the dimly recollected emotions in which he believes his salvation to be involved.

Many a one commits to the grave a friend or relative, a child or parent, dear to him beyond expression, but not, if his creed be true, dear to his God. Oh, then, what miseries are the strongest affections of our nature, their objects being consigned to never-ending torments! Unless the mourner can immolate human feeling on the iron altar of his creed, that thought will be, in his bosom, a worm that dieth not, and a fire that is not quenched, till he shall cease to live, or cease to be a Calvinist.

How can a benevolent man feel when he views his whole race as totally depraved by nature, and under the wrath and curse of God? When he contemplates a restricted and partial plan of salvation, leaving a large portion of his brethren only the sad inheritance to which they were born, of perpetually accumulating guilt and misery, has he our full complacency of soul in the character and plans of God, and the destiny of man? Have we not a delight to bestow upon him for which he has no equivalent, and of which he can scarcely have an adequate conception?

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* The illustrations which follow are not imaginary cases, but facts, some of them of no very rare occurrence, which the author has no doubt must have fallen under the observation of most of his readers (as well as of himself) who are at all conversant with the actual consequences of Calvinistic opinions. (See an interesting anecdote in a discourse on *The Consolations of Pure Christianity.* By J. Isaac.)

Some of these are cases of suffering unalleviated, or aggravated by religious opinion: you send a purer faith not only to heal the broken-hearted sufferers, but to give deliverance to the captive of a tyrannous superstition, who is wrung with sympathy in their sorrows, and would, but cannot, or dares not, give them consolation. He whom duty or friendship has made the witness of these horrors; who, clinging yet to the faith from which they flowed, has felt his whole heart revolt against his creed, yet trembled to indulge the rebel emotions which he could not stifle; who has writhed at the sight of misery without a cure, and man without hope, while his religion, which he deemed the best gift of God, only made him a wretch among fellow wretches;—he will bless you for reconciling faith to reason, and humanity to piety; for rescuing him from looking hopelessly on hopeless anguish, and enabling him to comfort man without blaspheming God.

Hitherto we have only displayed the utility of your efforts in their beneficial effect on individual converts; and by this our proposition is established; for that by which large moral advantages accrue to many individuals must needs benefit the community. We proceed to confirm the inference, by showing how your success affects the large classes into which society is distributed.

If it be good that individuals should embrace Unitarianism, then should we welcome every proper method of publishing its tenets, establishing its worship, uniting its professors, and extending its influence. This Institution has not only been the means of making many proselytes to the truth; it has united them in societies, collected congregations, led them to friendly communication with each other; called forth talent, zeal, and charity; softened minor differences, and embodied us in the defence and diffusion of great principles; and been mainly instrumental in giving us that name and place among religious denominations which we now possess. Many a solitary follower of his Master has been made known to congenial spirits, who have smoothed and cheered his way; many a congregation has made its humble temple resound with songs of praise, which but for you had been never raised to heaven; many a small and feeble band, sinking under the rod of local intolerance, have you inspired with confidence and joy, like that of the prophet's servant who trembled before the Syrian host, till his eyes were opened, and he saw the mountain covered with the armies of the Lord.

And in that mighty mass of religionists whose opinions we combat, and from the contemplation of whose numbers we sometimes shrink back appalled, I see traces, clear, broad, and bright, of good which you have accomplished. Why is orthodoxy no longer what it was? Why do thousands hesitate at the name of Calvinist without the addition of modern or moderate? Why has so much labour been bestowed on mysteries to give them the semblance of rationality? Why have the leading doctrines of the system been guarded and limited, explained and qualified? Why do our brethren disown as calumnious, expressions of their faith and feelings which their fathers used spontaneously and unblushingly? Why are numbers of them becoming more rational in faith, more scriptural in worship, more liberal in spirit? I do not hesitate to ascribe much of this change, so happy for themselves, for us, and for society, to that spirit of inquiry which you have raised, and which, where it failed of establishing truth, has yet checked the errors of superstition, and mitigated the fury of fanaticism.

In most countries there are some who reject Christianity. The increase of the number of those who divest virtue of the awful sanctions with which it is guarded and enforced by revelation, is generally considered dangerous to the well-being of a community. Hence legislators repress them by penal statutes. There is a better way of checking infidelity. Show religion to be reasonable. Emancipate the gospel from the bondage of corruption in which it has been held by priests and rulers, and give it to the world pure and glorious as it came from heaven. Then will the keenest weapons of objectors fall pointless to the ground.

They have generally attacked not the gospel itself, but human additions which arrogated to be a part of it;—separate and destroy these, and they will be, if honest, converted, and if dishonest, silenced.

In tracing the influence of any event upon society, we cannot pass over its bearings upon the numerous class of persons associated together in the enjoyment of exclusive advantages and dignities under the name of the Established Church. What is the effect on them of the spread of Unitarianism? They may for a time cling to creeds and ceremonies, and make a show of defending them, after their absurdity has been demonstrated; but this cannot last. It is probable that public opinion will become so enlightened, that these will cease even among themselves to command either belief or veneration, and then they will save their institutions from destruction by that reformation for which some of the brightest ornaments of their church have struggled so nobly, but unsuccessfully, because the public were not prepared for it. I do not mean to say that I should approve an establishment even when so purified; but if the state must patronise a religion, the less of superstition and bigotry it takes under its wing the better for the community. Those deserve well of their country, of Christianity, of the world, whose efforts tend to the diminution of patronised and consecrated error.

There are at all times too many who pay little or no attention to religious subjects; men of various characters and dispositions, occupied by pleasures or business: very unimportant may seem to them the conflicts of religionists and the triumphs of opinions; but they cannot be wholly out of the sphere of their influence. They may not move on our world, but they are at least within its atmosphere. All great changes in the doctrines and practices of those who are religious, must affect in some degree those who are not religious. The rationality or mysticism, the liberality or bigotry, of the prevalent theology of their age and country, must do something towards enlightening or darkening their minds, lowering or raising the tone of their morality, and contracting or expanding their hearts. They preclude their own direct participation of the good you disseminate, but they cannot avoid the faint and distant reflection of its blessedness.

The great majority of the community must toil for daily bread, and have but little leisure for speculation. Are they therefore to be left under the dominion of systems that keep down the reasoning powers, plunge their feelings into the constant whirl of enthusiastic excess, and subject them to the furious passions of bigotry? Are they incapable of a simpler faith—or is it not adapted to their wants, capacities, and station? One supposition is a libel on man, and the other on scripture. You have refuted both by facts. Unitarianism is increasingly the religion of the poor, and with the happiest results. It is elevating their intellectual character, and, as far as it extends, forming—what tyranny and superstition regard with horror, but the philanthropist with delight—a reading and a thinking public.

What misery has false religion produced in the world by the agency of governments and political institutions! Hence inquisitions, massacres, proscriptions, persecutions, tortures, and murders; hence penal and sanguinary laws, and ferocious wars. Whatever remnants of these evils may survive, the same in spirit, though limited in extent, the spread of Unitarianism must be their death-blow. It is the mighty angel commissioned of Heaven to take this millstone from the neck of Christianity, to cast it into the abyss to be found no more, and raise the song of holy triumph over the fall of the spiritual Babylon of idolatry, mystery, and persecution.

Prophecy has announced a diffusion of Christianity, of its truths, its joys, its holy and peaceful influence, to an extent yet unrealised. What prospect is there of this event, prior to a thorough reform of the corruptions of the Christian church? A few ignorant savages may be taught to repeat what they do not understand; but the spread of Christianity is that of knowledge, and it can never make men enlightened, nor be received by the already enlightened Jew, Hindoo, or Mahometan, till it has shaken off the cumbrous contradictions piled on it through ages of darkness. These fetters and incumbrances must be thrown aside before religion can run and be glorified through the world. Every step towards the restitution of its native purity is therefore an advance to its universal extension. You are giving it a tendency to that state in which alone it can accomplish the intentions of its author, and fulfil his predictions and its own destiny, by becoming the religion of the world. Its progress was stayed by corruption; at the revival of its purity will recommence its march of conquest.

And now, putting a belief in Unitarianism out of the question, I would appeal to any man who loves his country and who loves mankind, and ask him whether we are not benefiting society? whether, supposing all religions in themselves alike to him, he must not wish well to *that* which is so favourable to strength, and freedom, and energy of mind; which delivers the soul from the thraldom of priestcraft, the dread of inquiry, and a slavish veneration for antiquity; which at once puts down tyranny over conscience, the partialities and proscriptions of bigotry; which warms the frigidity of scepticism, and allays the fervours of enthusiasm; which teaches the poor to read, to reason, and to judge; in whose sunshine the social joys and affections again expand the blossoms which had been nipped and withered by a gloomy fanaticism; a religion which brings in its train reason, knowledge, charity, peace, freedom, and felicity; which cannot coexist with intolerance or persecution in any shape, but, having in its cradle strangled the serpents of individual bigotry and misery, shall go forth in its maturity to rid the world of all the horrid monsters of superstition by which it has been for ages enslaved and desolated? Will he not hail its success as an omen of fairer days? Will he not allow its promoters that meed of praise which some of our brethren withhold, from what we deem a mistaken candour? Let the merits of the Unitarian Fund, as a means of improving the condition of society, be fairly tried; Truth, Liberality, and Benevolence will plead in its behalf, and Impartiality pronounce it a blessing to mankind.

What then should be the decision and the conduct of those to whom Unitarianism is "the glorious gospel of the blessed God"? Can they be so selfish as to wish for a monopoly of truth? Are they so dead to the glory of God as not to labour for the restoration to him of that worship which is his due alone, but which has been so long and generally offered to others? Can they stand by in silence while his character is blackened, and not vindicate its loveliness, nor make one effort to give back the alienated hearts of his children to the universal Father? Are they the friends of liberality, and do they stand neutral in the great contest between liberal and illiberal opinions, a comprehensive and an exclusive faith? Do they prize purity of character, without aiding the spread of that system which makes it of most importance in the sight of God, and to the future destiny of man? Can they love their fellows, and not aim at exploding notions which, while they sometimes elevate in baseless raptures, at others depress in causeless apprehension, terror, and despair? Are they Unitarians, and yet indifferent whether Unitarianism glimmer in their studies, like a lamp in a sepulchre, or be set on high to illumine the world with beams of joy and love? Away with such suppositions! The little prejudices that have obstructed unanimity in the prosecution of this high design must fall and vanish, and we shall unite in demolishing the fanes of error and superstition, to rebuild with their materials the temple of pure religion.

Persevere then with caution, but with firmness; with a zeal wise and moderate, but steady and inextinguishable. Animated by past success, look forward with hope to future enterprise. Far more than was ever expected has been already accomplished; and in some instances you have realised what the timid and desponding pronounced impossible but by miraculous interference. These are not laurels in whose shade you are to repose; but you may fairly prize them as the honourable trophies of benevolent exertion, to be displayed as a triumphant refutation of doubts and objections, and used as incentives to continued and extended usefulness. Could we lead those most averse from your plans into some places where your missionaries have laboured, they would meet with arguments, more potent than any which I can urge, that would compel them to unite with heart and soul in our great cause. Could they hear one rejoicing in mental liberty and peace, after years of painful bondage to creeds which he could not believe, yet dared not question; another in deep emotion, blessing the God of love whom formerly he slandered by attributes of sternness and partiality; a third anticipating with complacency a futurity big with blessings to all mankind, at which he once shuddered as a scene of eternal guilt and suffering;—could they see new societies springing up, diligent as the Bereans in their search after truth, firm as martyrs in its profession, zealous as apostles in its propagation, and liberal as the first Christians of Jerusalem in the application of their limited worldly means to every work of piety or benevolence,—oh, surely then their judgments would approve, their hearts would warm; they would unite with the Society whose works these are, and which has made "the wilderness and the solitary place to be glad, and the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose"!

Go on, ye generous agents of a generous Institution! Follow your great Master's course, and from village to village preach the gospel to the poor; mingle in their bitter cup the sweet ingredient of a pure religion. Their sufferings are enough, without the aggravating addition of degrading notions and visionary horrors;—be it your happy task to elevate their minds by free inquiry, expand their hearts in universal love, and soothe their sorrows by glorious prospects. Give them the pure word of God, and their gratitude shall be your noble recompense. Of you it shall be said, "When the ear heard you, then it blessed" you, and "when the eye saw" you, "it gave witness unto" you; and upon you came "the blessing of him that was ready to perish" in the abyss of impiety or fanaticism. For raising them in the scale of being, and teaching them to think and feel, to act and enjoy, as men and Christians, you shall not lose your reward; for, when summoned to await in the grave the second coming of the Saviour, you may close your eyes in hope, exclaiming, "I have not lived in vain."

And you, who need not my endeavours to prove the utility of the Unitarian Fund, nor my persuasions to afford it your support; friends of God and man, of religion and society; who are prepared undismayed to encounter opposition, and unwearied to diffuse blessings,—into your hands I commend the cause which I have feebly but sincerely advocated. You will continue to emulate those illustrious characters whom God has from time to time raised up, to emancipate his creatures from the yoke of idolatry, bigotry, and superstition; your children will succeed to the glorious inheritance of a place amongst the benefactors of mankind; and the impulse which you have given shall last and increase, till the existence of the false and pernicious dogmas you oppose shall be matter only of history and wonder. The time will come when full justice shall be done to the benevolence of your motives, the nobleness of your zeal, and the utility of your exertions. Posterity shall recognise you as fellow-workers with God and Christ for universal happiness; and the awful thunders that rouse the dead shall but wake you to meet Him whose gospel you delivered from corruption, and sent forth in its native purity to bless the world.

THE VOICE OF REVELATION:

A Sermon preached before the Unitarian Society, at Essex-Street Chapel, on Thursday, April 16, 1818; *also before the Eastern Unitarian Society, at Palgrave, on Thursday, July* 2, 1818.

[1818.]

"Now the spirit speaketh expressly" (1 Timothy iv. 1).

The prophetic spirit, that is, delineating the usurped authority and corrupt doctrines and practices which would, in after times, pollute the church of Christ. These evils were announced with a distinctness which is very rarely to be found even in real predictions. The oracles of Heathenism were proverbially obscure; but their obscurity arose from a designed ambiguity, by which they could be accommodated to events of the most opposite description, whether joyous or afflictive, trifling or important, and which cannot in any instance be imputed to the prophecies recorded in the Old and New Testaments. Yet the latter were usually rendered obscure, previously to their accomplishment at least, by the language in which they were expressed, or the mode in which they were communicated. Paul directs the attention of Timothy to a remarkable exception, in the prediction which follows the text, of the nature and extent of the future corruptions of Christianity. It is couched in language of clear and definite import, to be taken in its literal and obvious meaning, thus forming a strong contrast with the mysteriousness of visionary emblematic scenery by which some events were dimly prefigured to the prophetic eye, and being destitute even of the veil cast over others by metaphorical expression. Such a deviation from the ordinary style of supernatural communications relative to futurity was useful on two accounts: it provided for those who should live in after times, when facts might be compared with the prediction, a striking proof of the divine origin of Christianity, and an authoritative direction to its genuine doctrines; and it also served to fix in the mind of the apostle and of his coadjutors a deep conviction of the fact that their religion would be so perverted, and to induce them to use such language as, though it could not prevent the evil, would yet be a solemn protest against it to all generations, and in due time work its extirpation. Paul introduces the fact in a way which seems to indicate some astonishment, and as if its extraordinary nature would have almost staggered his faith, had not the prediction been too explicit to admit of any variety of interpretation. He has been expatiating with complacency on the splendid advent of Christianity, and its wide diffusion. If the concluding verse of the third chapter refer to the gospel, and not to Christ personally, it is a glowing description of its success.* The mystery of godliness, or truth of holy tendency, long concealed from mortals, was displayed in the flesh, or by a man—Christ Jesus; was vindicated by miraculous operations; seen, or understood and received, by the messengers whom he selected; preached not only to Jews but Gentiles; believed on in the world, and met with a glorious reception: and yet, continues the apostle, the spirit saith expressly that, in latter times, some will fall away from the faith, giving heed to deceitful spirits, and to doctrines concerning demons. They will apostatise from the truth, notwithstanding these mighty confirmations and wide triumphs, which it might be supposed were a sufficient pledge of permanent security. Prophecy is sometimes obscure, that it may not seem to produce its own accomplishment. The clearness of this prediction, however necessary for its immediate reception, one would have almost thought an insurmountable obstacle to its accomplishment. It is indeed marvellous that such innovations in doctrine and in practice should have been made, in the very face of a prediction describing their nature and denouncing their absurdity and criminality. The injury which they did to Christianity is in some measure repaired by the powerful testimony which a comparison of the fact and the prophecy furnishes for the reality of those pretensions which its teachers made for themselves and their religion. That such corruptions should be introduced, and prevail for a time, is so plainly declared, as almost to form a constituent part of the revelation itself; and thus the very event which seemed fatal to the purity, if not to the existence of Christianity, becomes essential to its truth and a demonstration of its divinity.

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* It is satisfactorily ascertained that Θεὸς is not the genuine reading in this passage, and there certainly is more external evidence for ὃς than for ὃ, but the internal evidence seems to me to preponderate greatly for the latter reading, and to decide the question in its favour. If referred to the gospel, the subsequent clauses follow in the order of time, and each rises above the preceding in importance. If interpreted of Christ personally, the passage is scarcely intelligible, and the order of time is grossly violated by placing the ascension of Christ after the general diffusion of the gospel, for no other apparent purpose than that of forming a striking anti-climax.

In Dr. Campbell's dissertation on the word *Mystery*, he has shown that, in the New Testament, it never means a doctrine incomprehensible to human reason; but generally "a secret, any thing not disclosed, not published to the world, though perhaps communicated to a select number." It also meant the *hidden sense* of a parable, vision, &c.; that is its explanation, as in Mark iv. 11; Rev. i. 20. On the expression, "without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness," he observes: "The purport of the sentence plainly is, Great unquestionably is the divine secret, of which our religion brings the discovery."

The precision and definiteness which Paul mentions as distinguishing this from other prophecies, assimilate it with revelation in general,—with those revelations of truth, connected with devotion and morality, which constitute the word of God. The particular remark may be fairly taken as a general description of the character of Christianity. As to all that man should believe or do, hope or fear, "the spirit," inspiration or revelation, "speaketh expressly," with a voice universally intelligible. Truth may be seen on the very surface of the scriptures. They have not one set of doctrines for the vulgar, covering like a mask others only obvious to the learned or initiated; nor can any important truth be only ascertainable by attention to minute particulars or isolated texts, and by the application of profound research or dexterous criticism. "The heavens declare the glory of God," not by discoveries made in the astronomic scrutiny of each particular star, but by one great and lovely exhibition of the perfections of their Creator; and the doctrine of the gospel glares on the broad outline of its facts and revelations. Were an intelligent Heathen to arrive at once at an acquaintance with the New Testament, and with the various systems of doctrine taught for Christianity, there are certain great principles by which, without entering upon the endless labour of critically examining the construction of every sentence, he might at once say of each that it had, or had not, the evident characteristics of the gospel as taught by Christ and the apostles. In this way I propose to try the notions which claim the title of orthodox Christianity; and, without entering into the question whether this text be rightly translated, or that wrongly interpreted, to urge against them some general objections, founded upon undeniable facts, which will furnish a strong presumptive proof that that system was not the system of apostolic faith. The refutation of Trinitarianism is the proof of Unitarianism. The same arguments show the latter to be scriptural, which demonstrate the former to be unscriptural. It is a great mistake, however general, to suppose these arguments to be chiefly derived from verbal criticism. The most important of them are plain and popular, and may be as readily understood, and as accurately weighed, by any man of common sense as by the profoundest philosopher that ever lived.*

It is scarcely necessary to describe particularly the well-known tenets to which I refer as unwarrantably graced with the name of orthodox Christianity; they are the doctrines of a trinity, of original sin and total depravity, of satisfaction to the justice of God by the sufferings of his incarnate and equal Son, the salvation of believers by his imputed righteousness, and the eternal misery of the rest of mankind. These form a whole whose "spirit speaketh expressly;" but it is in tones of vengeance, dismay, and horror, very unlike the soothing and cheering voice of Him who announced "glad tidings of great joy to all people." To this system it may be objected:

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* In Mr. Belsham's reply to the *Brief Memorial on the Repeal of the* 9 *and* 10 *William III. by the Bishop of St. David's*, the method pursued in this sermon with reference to the whole system of Trinitarianism is employed with great success against the divinity of Christ. The Bishop's assertion that unlearned men could not be judges of that question, having sometimes found favour in the eyes of Unitarians, to the great injury of their cause, I cannot help availing myself of Mr. B.'s high authority and lucid statement for the opposite opinion. "I do not maintain that a critical skill in the Greek language is useless in the interpretation of the New Testament, nor do I assert that it may not happily elucidate here and there the meaning of a text which bears upon the present argument: but I do say that the evidence of the doctrine concerning the person of Christ does not depend upon verbal criticisms, and that arguments drawn from this topic are lighter than air in comparison with those which are deduced from other and more general considerations; and I maintain that a man of sound understanding and an honest mind, who does not know a word of Greek, and who has only King James's translation before him, is as competent to judge of the evidence of this fact as the Bishop of St. David's himself with all his acknowledged talents and learning." Mr. B. then proceeds to show how such a person would reason upon the deity and preëxistence of Christ from the facts or omissions of scripture.

I. That its enunciation requires the use of *unscriptural terms*, and of terms which are scriptural in a sense different from that in which they were employed by the sacred writers.

The most important distinguishing tenets of this creed are those which relate to the nature of the Deity, and the work of Christ; the one designated by the term "Trinity," the other by "Atonement or Satisfaction." A condensed description of what is called Evangelical Religion cannot be given without these terms. And yet (if we except the solitary substitution of atonement for reconciliation in Romans v. 11)* not one of them is once to be found in the whole New Testament. For modern teachers of Christianity they are necessary, for its original teachers they were not necessary; the former have them continually in their mouths, to the latter they would have been unintelligible.

The first of these tenets requires, in its detailed exposition, a number of terms and phrases, such as, "God the Son," "God the Holy Ghost," "God-man," "divine person," "hypostatic union," "coequal," "coessential," &c., &c., &c., which have no place, nor any equivalents, in the sacred volume. They are useful in unfolding the doctrine of the trinity, but they were not wanted, nor were they employed, in explaining the Christian notion of the Deity.

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* "The Greek noun καταλλαγην, translated *reconciliation*, comes from the verb καταλλασσω, which in the preceding verse our translators hare rendered *reconcile*. Wherefore the noun derived from it should not have been translated by them, in this passage, *atonement*, but *reconciliation*, as it is in all the other passages where it occurs."—Macknight *in locum*.

For some excellent remarks on the unscriptural terms used, of necessity, in explaining the popular faith, and on the meaning of the word *atonement* in the Old Testament, see Aspland's *Three Sermons*, page 90, note, 2d edit.

The theological meaning now affixed to *atonement* is an innovation in language, to which the etymology of the word and ancient usage may be opposed. Every student of old English writers must be familiar with it in the proper sense of *at-one-ment*, or reconciliation.

Various technical terms of a subordinate description might be adduced, which are indeed to be found in scripture, but which it is evident, on bare inspection, are systematically used in an unscriptural sense. They designate things which, from their prominence in modern theology, require peculiar terms, but which, in apostolic theology, having no names, had either no existence or no importance. *Mystery*, as meaning a proposition at once revealed and incomprehensible, is unscriptural. So also is *imputed righteousness*,* for the righteousness of Christ transferred to the believer in him. *Mediator*† is associated in scripture not with Godhead, but with humanity and mortality. To these we may add *experience*, which is found once or twice in its common acceptation of a practical trial, but which now, with a large body of professed Christians, denotes a certain succession and vicissitude of emotions, supposed to arise from supernatural influences, and prized as the essence of religion and the proof of acceptance with God. As far as the modern application of these and a number of similar terms is considered, they are in fact as unscriptural as if they were not in the New Testament at all. They are *not* there in that sense which alone now gives them currency and worth.

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* Imputed righteousness means either the reckoning of faith for righteousness, particularly in the case of Abraham, who is held up as an example of meritorious trust in God to Christians, as in Romans iv. 11, 22-24 ; Gal. iii 6 ; and James ii. 23,—or the not imputing, *i.e* the forgiving of sin, as in Romans iv. 6 ; 2 Cor. v. 19. These are all the places in which that phrase occurs in the New Testament.

† The word *Mediator* is found six times in the New Testament. Twice it refers to Moses (Gal. iii. 19-20). The remaining instances are 1 Tim. ii. 5 ; Heb. viii. 6, ix. 15, xii. 24. It is applied to Christ with great propriety, as uniting Jews and Gentiles, and reconciling both to their common Parent. The infrequency of its use—for, excepting in the Epistle to the Hebrews, it is used only by Paul, and by him applied to Christ but once—is alone sufficient proof that the notions now connected with it were then unknown. Supposing Paul the author of that epistle, the New Testament contains twenty-seven distinct works, by eight different authors. If as many Trinitarian missionaries were to write as many works explanatory of the facts and doctrines of what they call Christianity, would the result be that Christ would only be called a *mediator* by one of them, and by him only once, in an acknowledged, and thrice in an anonymous publication ? If not, why would it be different ?

What should we think of a man who, professing to teach the Newtonian philosophy, should begin with informing us that it was necessary, in telling what Newton taught, to employ terms of which Newton never thought? Should we not think that the phraseology of the great philosopher himself was best adapted to express his opinions and discoveries; and that the necessity of employing new terms indicated a design to introduce some other system under the sanction of a venerated name? Are there not stronger grounds for suspicion when similar conduct is exhibited in stating the doctrines of that perfect teacher who "spake as never man spake"? What we deem the truths of his religion we state, fully and fairly, in his words and in those of his apostles. Is it probable that there are Christian doctrines which cannot be so stated? If the apostles really taught that to believe in a trinity is essential to salvation, is it not strange that they should never name a trinity? If they inculcated that Christ was a God-man, would they not have called him a God-man? Was the world saved by a satisfaction, and yet that stupendous event never designated in their writings by its appropriate appellation? It is utterly incredible. Christians have every inducement to grace their opinions with acknowledged scriptural terms. We see that they do this, as far as they can, though by perversion. But there are doctrines where even perversion fails, which are baptised unscriptural, and which cannot be named in the native language of Christianity. Where identity of phraseology has such obvious recommendations, diversity of terms breeds strong suspicion of diversity of doctrine, and the mere reading of its vocabulary makes us justly doubt whether Trinitarianism can be Christianity.

II. The doctrines of Trinitarianism are not any where taught, *as a system,* in the New Testament.

This is a fact which, however it be accounted for, can scarcely be disputed. Those doctrines have an intimate connection with, and mutual dependence upon, each other. They stand or fall together. The disproof of one is fatal to the whole; and if we admit any one, it is scarcely possible to withhold our credence from the rest. Hence we should infer that they would generally be taught *systemati-*

cally; and such is indisputably the fact. Their teachers seem to tread an enchanted circle, out of which they never move, and in which they revolve incessantly. In the great majority of their sermons and writings, all the tenets in question are to be found, embodied into one statement. Like stars linked together into a constellation, together they rise and together they set; the same cloud obscures them; the same eyes behold them; and together they vanish before the dawn of day and the rising of the sun. This inseparability is not matter of choice, taste, or policy; but arises from the nature of the tenets themselves, each of which is incomplete, useless, revolting even, without its associate doctrines. Had this been the system of Christ and the apostles, thus also, of course, would they have preached and written. Trinitarians, instead of being obliged to support their system by separate texts, culled from every part of scripture, from Genesis to Revelation; instead of endeavouring to prove, by a sentence or two, the Fall, from the epistle to the Romans; Total Depravity, from Job or the Psalms; the Trinity, from the gospel of Matthew; and the Atonement, from the epistle to the Hebrews,—instead of picking up the mangled limbs of their system, or piecing into a whole its form with shreds and patches swept together from every book of the Old and New Testaments, would have been able to show us that system in every book, majestic and complete. It would have stood portrayed in many a sermon and epistle, not one of which now contains any thing which they would offer to the world as a connected and systematic statement of the essential doctrines of their religion. How is this fact to be accounted for? If the writers of the New Testament, and the authorised teachers of Christianity whose discourses are there recorded, *were* Trinitarians, they acted in a way which is probably not imitated by a single Trinitarian in existence, and which could not be imitated without bringing his faith into universal and just suspicion. He who should believe tenets so interwoven with each other, and which, if true, it is essential to our salvation to believe, and yet avoid a connected statement of them as a whole, would be grossly unfaithful to his trust, would trifle with the cause of truth and the souls of men. We have only the alternative of laying this charge at the door of the apostles, or inferring that modern orthodoxy was not primitive Christianity. Unless they "shunned to declare all the counsel of God," large additions have been made to that counsel by the reveries of man.

III. The *omissions* of the first teachers of Christianity are fatal to the supposition that their system was Trinitarianism.

The opinions of a speaker or writer are frequently as well ascertained from what is omitted as from what is advanced. There are circumstances in which we may be morally certain that nothing would prevent the introduction of the trinity, the deity of Christ, the atonement, &c., but ignorance or disbelief of these doctrines. This argument from omission is generally conclusive; but it becomes most powerfully so when applied to a divine revelation, and in reference to doctrines which can only be known by revelation. In such a case silence is denial, and omission is confutation. Whatever reasons may sometimes induce and justify concealment, they cannot apply to the scriptures, which are the sole and perfect rule of faith and practice; to the discourses of Christ, who "was born, and came into the world, to bear witness unto the truth;" or to those of his apostles, who were directed to teach men "to observe all things whatsoever he had commanded them," and who, "by manifestation of the truth, commended themselves to every man's conscience, in the sight of God." Bearing this in mind, let us advert to some occasions on which, supposing them to be true, the introduction of the tenets in question would seem unavoidable.

In the parable of the prodigal son, our Lord taught the doctrine of the forgiveness of sins. Now, if it be true that there is no forgiveness without an adequate satisfaction to divine justice, that to make this satisfaction was the great end for which the Son of God became man, and that our sole reliance for pardon must be upon what he did and suffered, then to teach that doctrine without any allusion to such essential facts was not only passing by a proper opportunity for stating them, but giving an imperfect and therefore erroneous account of the matter, which must be both delusive and dangerous. The parable is constructed upon the principle of free forgiveness; it would have been just as easy to adapt its machinery to the principle of satisfaction.* Nor do I see how the suppression of so important a truth, if it be one, can be reconciled with the character of Christ as a perfect teacher, or even with his benevolence and integrity as a man.

He frequently predicted his own death, and used a variety of means to prepare his disciples for an event so destructive of the hope which yet lingered in their hearts, that he would assume temporal authority. The longest of his recorded discourses, except the Sermon on the Mount, is one of consolation to them, delivered almost immediately before his apprehension and crucifixion.† What could have been more consoling than to know that his sufferings and death were essential to human salvation, and that he was thus to make an atonement for the sins of men? Did he comfort them by this declaration? No. He dwelt on the supremacy of the Father over all, and on his boundless love; on his own resurrection; on the outpouring of the spirit, and on the success of his cause; but he passed over in silence that which, if true, would have been worth all the rest, and made them comparatively unworthy of notice. Surely it was unlike his wisdom and friendship to dwell, at such a time, and for such a purpose, on every topic save the most applicable and powerful of all.

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* It would have been just as easy, but the result would have been fatal to much of the beauty and pathos of that exquisite tale. We should have lost its most affecting incident. "But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." Instead of this, the father must have been described as refusing to admit the penitent to his presence; the obedient son as interposing on his brother's behalf, and offering to bear the penalty of his faults; the father as accepting his offer, and, after duly afflicting him in body and mind, restoring the fugitive to his favour. Miserable substitution for the lovely imagery which the Saviour adopted as illustrative of *his* theory of forgiveness! What would have been its moral effects? Might not many an erring but penitent child have had to lament that the tenderness which would have restored him to virtue and to peace, was banished from the bosom of an earthly father by too close an imitation of his God?

† John xiv., xv., xvi.

After the ascension of Christ, and the bestowment of miraculous powers, we have a speech of Peter's,[*] addressed to an immense multitude, and with great effect, in which, if he believed the deity of Christ and the atonement, there are many reasons why we should calculate upon their introduction. It was the opening of the apostolic commission, the proclamation of what that Christianity was to the propagation of which they had dedicated their lives. Yet it contains no mention of what have been called the great essentials and peculiarities of Christianity. Peter had the recollection of his cowardly denial of his master yet fresh in his mind, and would be eager therefore to assert boldly whatever would redound to his honour. Yet he omits what are now considered the great proofs of his dignity and generosity. In vehement terms he charges the Jews with guilt in crucifying Jesus, but says nothing of the foul aggravation of their guilt in the godhead of Jesus. He exults at the triumph of divine grace over human malice, in the death of Christ being followed by his resurrection; but says nothing of the more triumphant fact, that his death purchased the redemption of the world. His silence is perfectly consistent with ignorance of these doctrines; perfectly inconsistent with a belief of them. He speaks of the death of Christ, and of his dignity; but pauses, on both subjects, precisely at that point which Unitarianism reaches, and beyond which Trinitarianism goes on in its peculiar path.

The interview of Peter with Cornelius[†] is remarkable. It was brought about by supernatural agency, for the express purpose of instructing the latter in Christianity. He was already a Theist and a devout man, and prepared therefore for the peculiar mysteries, if such there had been, of Christianity. The instructions given on this occasion were the commencement of the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles, and they were followed and sanctioned by miraculous gifts. Yet they are wholly free from the distinguishing tenets of Calvinism or Trinitarianism. Those tenets were not among the truths which Christ "commanded" Peter and his associates "to preach unto the people, and to testify," or they were all uniformly forgetful of the most important part of their errand, or faithless to their most sacred trust.

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[*] Acts ii. 14-36.

[†] Acts x.

Paul was accused at Athens* of introducing "new gods," because he "preached Jesus and the resurrection." What was his defence? That he preached the one God, and the *man* Jesus whom He had raised from the dead to judge the world. Where was his honesty, if he really had asserted that Jesus was a God? His speech most clearly tended to produce the impression that, if any had thought so, they had fallen into a gross mistake as to the nature of his doctrine.

We might easily multiply such facts. How are these extraordinary omissions accounted for? By the early orthodox as a systematic plan of concealment, of no very honourable description; while their successors attempt to invalidate the fact by putting a few detached sentences on the rack, to extort from them a confession of Trinitarianism. If the apostles did not preach the trinity and atonement, what becomes of their orthodoxy, according to the modern standard? If they did preach those doctrines, and the historian systematically omitted them, what becomes of his credit? On either supposition, what becomes of the sufficiency of scripture?

IV. From certain important *facts* recorded in scripture, we may learn what are, and what are not, the doctrines of Revelation.

We judge of men's principles by their deeds more than by their words. The language of facts is often express and definite, and should rather guide us in interpreting words than be itself interpreted by them. There are some prominent and leading facts in sacred history which indicate, very satisfactorily to my mind, the nature of scripture doctrine.

The unity of God was the soul of Judaism. For his adherence to this principle Abraham was rewarded by the separation of his posterity as a peculiar and privileged people; its preservation was the great object of the Mosaic institutions; its recovery, the purpose for which, from time to time, prophets were raised up, inspired, and vested with miraculous powers; and finally, it had the sanction of Christianity, which spread it over the nations. On the system of our opponents, it is as important to know that God is three as it is to know that he is one; it is full as closely connected with right views of his character, with the scheme of redemption, and with the hope of salvation. Its station, therefore, in the annals of revelation, should be as conspicuous, its announcement as imposing, and its evidences as convincing. Yet this pretended truth, of rival moment with the doctrine of the divine unity, seems wholly overlooked by Providence. No voice from heaven proclaimed it to the world; no people are selected to be its depositary; no institutions are framed for its preservation; no prophets inspired for its elucidation; no miracles wrought for its confirmation. There is absolutely nothing in its favour to compete with the splendid machinery, operating for ages, to produce, preserve, and extend the belief that God is one. The truth and supreme importance of the doctrine of the trinity are so closely blended, that this fact, which destroys the latter, involves the former in the same ruin. It stands foremost in the history of what erring man has taught and imposed upon his fellow-man, but has no place in the record of those truths in which God himself has been the instructor of his creatures.

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* Acts xvii. 16-34.

What are the four gospels but an amplified declaration of the humanity of Christ? They are the history of a man,* who was selected from other men for high dignity; who was inspired with all needful wisdom, and gifted with all needful power, both of which he declared to be derived and limited; who hungered, thirsted, and was weary; who was betrayed, scourged, crucified, and raised from the dead. What is the express tendency of these facts, but to rivet on our minds the conviction that the subject of the narrative was not a divine person, but a man, and "like unto his brethren"?

Another decisive fact is, that the apostles uniformly preached Unitarianism. Their uniform omission of Trinitarian doctrines, already adverted to, must be coupled with their constant introduction of the opposite tenets. They did not teach the Trinity, the Deity of Christ, and the Atonement; and they did teach the Unity of God, the Humanity of Christ, and Salvation by Grace. These are the chief and constant topics of the sermons recorded in the Acts. They are strictly and exclusively Unitarian. Can there be a clearer judgment between the conflicting systems, both claiming to be apostolic, than that they did preach the one, and did not preach the other? Can there be a more extraordinary inference, than that the tenets they passed over in silence are the essentials of the gospel, and those which they taught a dangerous heresy of modern invention?

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* It is worthy of remark that Jesus Christ is expressly called a man in connection with his greatest works and highest offices, as if purposely to prevent their being used as arguments for his possessing a different nature. "What manner of *man* is this, that even the winds and the waves obey him?" "Through this *man* is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins." "There is one Mediator between God and men, the *man* Christ Jesus." "By *man* came also the resurrection of the dead." "God will judge the world in righteousness by that *man* whom he hath ordained."

The whole of the New-Testament history proves that the Jews and the Christians were agreed as to the object of worship, while they differed about the Messiahship of Jesus. This agreement was frequently declared by the apostles invoking, or speaking of, their God as the "God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," &c.; it was practically declared by their joining in synagogue worship; and it also appears by the complete absence of any dispute upon the subject. We know that Unitarians and Trinitarians cannot unite thus harmoniously; the latter would never think of describing their Deity as the God of Priestley and of Lindsey; nor can we avoid the conviction that the Jews and Christians of that age were both Trinitarians or both Unitarians. Which is most probable? Which was the doctrine of the Old Testament that remained undisputed and unchanged under the new dispensation? The Jews now unquestionably coincide with us, as to the undivided personality of the Deity; and in attempting their conversion, we should have the same points of agreement and of difference as existed between their ancestors and the first Christians. It is incumbent on our opponents to account for the fact, that a subject of controversy, of vital importance, has arisen between them and the Jews, which was unheard of in the apostolic age. One party or the other must have departed from the faith then common to both. But which? Has there been a universal apostasy among the children of Israel from the Trinitarianism of their forefathers; an apostasy brought about in profound silence; leaving no records of its agents, origin, progress, or consummation; and extending to every country whither they have been driven? Such an event would be nothing short of miraculous, and would form a divine attestation to the truth thus embraced of the proper unity of God. If this has not happened, and if their present is their original faith, then the primitive Christians who agreed with them were Unitarians, and the doctrine of the trinity is a gross corruption.

V. The first teachers of Christianity reasoned in a manner which implies that they were Unitarians.

Reasoning is an indication of system, in itself almost as strong as direct assertion, and in some cases much more so. If a professed Christian, in delivering his opinions on God, morals, and futurity, rested every thing upon the principles of natural religion, it might fairly be suspected that he had little or no faith in Christianity. Gibbon's celebrated attack on Christianity is introduced by a verbal homage to its divinity; and such was the frequent practice of Voltaire, and other unbelievers. If the principles on which men reason are justly taken as evidence of their opinions when unaccompanied by, or even in opposition to, express declarations, they are still more weighty when, as in the present argument, we claim a coincidence of direct assertion.

When Christ vindicated himself from the charge of Sabbath-breaking (John v. 16), by saying, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," the Jews accused him of "making himself equal with," or rather "like unto God." To this his reply is, that whatever he did was in imitation of the conduct of God; in consequence of his instruction and direction; by authority which he conferred, and power which he communicated; and for the advancement of his glory: concluding with the solemn declaration, that as his powers were altogether derived from the Father, so they were only exercised in subservience to his designs. "I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." Here Christ repels as a calumny the very assertions which Trinitarians advance concerning him as an honourable truth. The interpretation which his enemies affixed to his words is persisted in by his friends, notwithstanding his contradiction. They repel the charge of blasphemy by arguments directly opposed to his: by pleading that he was equal with God; that his wisdom, authority, and power were not derived; that he could of himself do all things; and that, as the eternal and infinite God, he could not but seek his own will and glory. And such is the proper mode of repelling it *on their principles*. His vindication was appropriate, if he were an exalted man; impertinent, on the supposition of his being an incarnate God.

A similar instance occurs in John x. 33. The Jews threatened to stone him "because," as they said, "that thou, being a man, makest thyself God. Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken, say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God?" Almost every pleader for the divinity of Christ reasons on the two assumptions which he here opposes, viz. that he claimed divine titles; and that those titles are proof of the divinity of the person to whom they are applied. They adopt the reasoning employed by the Jews, and we follow Christ in meeting it with denial and disproof.

If Christ were God, there would be proof of the fact in his history, and the evangelists would so have written as to display that proof. The tendency of the first three gospels is confessedly Unitarian. That of John is more decidedly and avowedly an historical argument; a piece of narrative reasoning, the aim of which is not only to be traced in the record itself, but we have his own declaration of it. "These are written, that ye might believe"—the divinity of Christ, say some interpreters—the apostle adds, "that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." Certainly no Trinitarian would ever have written a life of Christ without designing to prove much more.

In 1 Cor. xv., Paul reasons from the resurrection of Christ to the resurrection of all men, on the ground of a common nature. "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." The argument is destroyed by the notion of his deity. It rests wholly upon the simple humanity of Christ. Those who deny that doctrine may also connect the two events, and deduce the one from the other; but they do so upon a principle altogether different from that of the apostle.

The duty of forgiving freely is repeatedly enforced in the New Testament by the argument that God forgives us freely. This cannot be consistently urged by a Satisfactionist. That God forgives with an atonement, cannot prove that man should forgive without an atonement. Had not such exhortations existed in scripture they would never have been used by any consistent Calvinist, but would have been justly regarded as a distinctive peculiarity of Unitarianism.

Great was the offence of the cross in those days, and how was it repelled? A ready and triumphant method would have been to reply that the victim was divine, and that his sufferings were an atonement for the sins of men. The sacred writers never resorted to such topics, but employed those which our principles would supply on such an occasion. They urged that it was connected with his resurrection;* that it led to the union in one church of Jews and Gentiles;† and that for his patient submission he was highly honoured and exalted by his God and Father.‡

This selection of instances is sufficient to show that scriptural reasoning is, frequently at least, strictly and peculiarly Unitarian reasoning.

VI. Trinitarianism has been remarkably connected with the allowed corruptions of Christianity.

A comparison of the prediction which follows the text with that in 2 Thess. ii. and with John's description of the mystical Babylon, will furnish the following characteristics of that corrupt system of nominal Christianity against whose advances the apostles raised their warning voice in vain, but from which the church of Jesus shall at length have a glorious deliverance. 1. The usurpation of spiritual authority. "Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." 2. Alliance with temporal powers, and persecution. "The kings of the earth have committed fornication with her (the spiritual Babylon of John corresponding with Paul's 'man of sin'),—and I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints." 3. Pious frauds and feigned miracles. "Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their consciences seared with a hot iron,—whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power, and signs, and lying wonders." 4. Celibacy and abstinence. "Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats." 5. Erroneous doctrine, and other objects of worship besides God. "Some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits,* and doctrines concerning demons."† 6. Mystery. "And upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth."

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* 2 Cor. xiii. 4. † Ephes. ii. 16. ‡ Phil. ii. 8-11.

The corruption thus described preceded the rise of Popery, and was only partially affected by the Reformation. There can be little doubt about the persons to whom the prophecy refers. The tyrants over conscience, the priestly allies of governments, the persecutors and pretended workers of miracles, the violators of the great laws of nature, are very easily discernible in ecclesiastical history. These are the parties whom the spirit of prophecy solemnly arraigns of being also the corrupters of Christian doctrine. If our views of the gospel be correct, the prediction is accomplished, the charge is fully substantiated, and they stand convicted and condemned. But if the opposite system be true; if the doctrines of the Trinity, Original Sin, the Incarnation, and Atonement, be the essentials of the gospel,—then, strange to tell, they have been among its best friends, have been its revivers, champions, preservers, and propagators! With but trifling exception, those tenets have shone conspicuous in the established creeds of all the state religions that exist, or ever have existed. They have been the common faith of popes, monks, and persecutors. The men who exhibited every other prophetic mark of corrupters of the faith have been their defenders, pleaded for them against all gainsayers, procured for them political patronage, held councils for their confirmation, branded all opposition to them as heresy, illustrated and proved them in voluminous writings, and extended them by zealous exertions. *They* depart from the faith! not if this was *the faith* of Paul, for they have done it good service.

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* "*To deceiving spirits;* that is, to false pretensions to inspiration."—Macknight.

† Absurdly rendered in the common translation *devils*. The word means, beings of a middle nature between God and man, or, the deified souls of departed men, who were deemed objects of worship.

If the Trinitarian be startled at finding his creed where prophecy asserts a corrupt creed should be found, under the patronage of such characters, let him also reflect upon the marks by which the same authority distinguishes the pretended from the true Gospel. These marks are, pretensions to inspiration, multiplication of the objects of worship, and mystery. In our view, they apply to Trinitarianism, whether Catholic or Protestant. No party can possibly think that they attach to Unitarianism. By them, according to scripture, the corrupt faith is to be distinguished from the genuine. But they do not distinguish between Trinitarianism and Popery. They are common to both, and mystery is alike branded on their foreheads. A difference of degree is all that can possibly be contended for: but the fair inference from scripture is, not that the corruption of Christianity should bear these marks more conspicuously than Christianity itself, but that they should be its discriminating features.

It is the fact, that the text of the New Testament has been corrupted; that the most remarkable interpolations are doctrinal phrases; that they are all in behalf of the doctrine of the Trinity, and its kindred doctrines; and that they make more strongly for that doctrine than any expressions which remain after their expulsion. How inestimable to its advocates was the text relating to the heavenly witnesses!* Nor were references to a God manifest in the flesh,† or to the blood of God,‡ without their worth in proving the incarnation and the atonement.

Are we not justified in regarding such doctrines with suspicion, when we see that they have been supported by additions to, and alterations of, the sacred text; and that they were deeply involved in the great predicted apostasy from primitive Christianity?

VII. The New Testament breathes a different spirit from modern orthodoxy.

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* 1 John v. 7.

† 1 Tim. iii. 16: "He who (or which) was manifested."

‡ Acts xx. 28: "the church of the Lord, which he hath purchased with his own blood." The erroneousness of the received text, in these instances, is admitted by the best Trinitarian critics.

It abounds with appeals to the judgment and reason of men, calling on them to "search the scriptures," applauding them for so doing, speaking "as to wise men," and inquiring, "Why do ye not even of yourselves judge that which is right?" But the system which claims its honours restricts reason to the examination of external evidence, and demands for doctrines implicit faith, though there be some at which "reason stands aghast, and faith herself is half confounded."

The advocates for Calvinism acknowledge that there is something of the vindictive in its spirit; nay, they contend that this is necessary to its excellence. What is there vindictive in genuine Christianity? Supposing an inquirer to read the New Testament through, and remain in doubt about its doctrines, he cannot surely hesitate in asserting its spirit to be that of pure benevolence.

It is clear that, whatever tenets the apostles taught, their system was one of liberality, diffusiveness, and general benevolence. It had nothing of that contracting influence on the heart exercised by faith in a partial God, personal election, and particular redemption; a faith whose iron fetters press tightly on the bosom, while the benevolent heart, prisoned beneath, indignantly swells and throbs almost to bursting. Such a discordancy of temper and spirit is inconsistent with an identity of principle.

It is impossible, within the limits of a sermon, to do justice to this argument, or to offer more than a brief outline of its bearings, and a limited selection of examples. It seems to me most conclusive. What can disprove the claims of Trinitarianism to be the creed of scripture, if that be not done by showing that it requires terms and phrases which the doctrines of the apostles did not require; that it is best stated, and is in fact universally stated, systematically, while no such system is found in their sermons or epistles; that it is inconsistent with the conduct of Providence in the great events of sacred history; that the apostles did not advance its tenets, when they had every inducement to do so, if they were a part of their faith; that they reasoned, exhorted, replied, and acted in a way wholly dissimilar, and often opposed to what Trinitarians would have done in their circumstances; and that it has been intimately connected with corruptions of the text and doctrine of scripture, while in some most important points its spirit and tendency are not those of Christianity? By indications such as these, far more intelligible, certain, and impressive than mere verbal declarations, "the spirit speaketh expressly:" they are the VOICE OF REVELATION, directing us to the truth, commanding our zeal for its revival and diffusion, and promising its final universal prevalence.

Let us not be told, then, that our opinions rest upon verbal criticism and alterations of scripture. The labours of critics are important; and those who have rescued the text from interpolation, the translation from fraud or error, and the interpretation from confusion, have deserved well of the whole Christian world; and by thus serving at once their own cause, and that of genuine Christianity, they have given another presumptive proof of their identity. But these improvements are not the foundation of our faith; that is sunk deep into the heart of revelation itself, and can only perish in the destruction of the ground on which it rests.

Profound researches and abstruse disquisitions must ever be confined to the learned and speculative few; while facts appeal to the common sense of the many. A man who is incapable of deciding upon an interpolation, may see the broad contrast between the preaching of the apostles and that of modern orthodoxy, and reasonably trace these different effects to a diversity of cause: he will fairly conclude that, when honest men speak differently, it is because they believe differently.

When I endeavour to show that Christianity is one thing, and Trinitarianism another, let me not be supposed to partake of the spirit of those bigots who deny the Christian name to those who hold not their creed. We have opposite notions, in many respects, of what Christ taught. But we all recognise him as an authoritative and perfect teacher, and hence our common right to the name of Christian. From that name may the humble and benevolent disposition of a disciple be never separated!

Yet "error, voluntary or involuntary, so far as it extends, must have a pernicious influence. The members of this Society think, therefore, that they are doing signal service to the cause of truth and good morals, by endeavouring to clear the Christian system from all foreign incumbrances, and by representing the doctrines of revelation in their primitive simplicity. Truth must ultimately be serviceable to virtue."*

Go on, then, to promote its diffusion by the distribution of books; a means at once noiseless, effectual, and extensive, like the water which works its way through the soil, unseen, unheard, and only traced by the luxuriance of the fields which it has fertilised. Scatter around the good seed; and though some may fall useless on the rock of prejudice, and some be crushed by the foot of persecution, your benevolent zeal will be amply recompensed by that which will spring up and flourish, and yield the rich produce of knowledge and goodness. Your object is important; your means are wisely chosen; your perseverance is honourable; your success considerable; your prospects are encouraging; and your reward will be great when He whom we serve shall come "to render to every man according to his deeds."

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* Preamble to the Rules of the Unitarian Society.

A COURSE OF LECTURES

ON SUBJECTS CONNECTED WITH

THE CORRUPTION, REVIVAL, AND FUTURE INFLUENCE OF GENUINE CHRISTIANITY.

[1819.]

PREFACE.

The following Course of Lectures was delivered at the Unitarian Chapel, in Parliament Court, Artillery Lane, Bishopsgate Street, during the months of November and December 1818, and is published in compliance with the desire, expressed in the most earnest and flattering manner, of the congregation which regularly assembles in that place, and of many other persons by whom it was attended.

But for such a requisition as scarcely left room for hesitation, these Lectures would certainly not have been given to the world. The critical reader who may think it worth while to prove that they confer no credit as a literary composition, will make no unanticipated discovery to the author; the events to which they relate are far too vast to be accelerated or retarded by the efforts of obscure individuals, even though highly gifted with those powers of influencing the opinions of others which he is conscious of possessing, if at all, only in a very inferior degree; nor can Unitarian Dissenters supply the absence of nobler motives in the advocates of their cause by conferring rewards which enrich the garland of the victors in theological contests, and even gild over the tarnished and battered armour of the vanquished. The members of my congregation did me the honour to think that the publication of the Lectures would be gratifying and instructive to them: to gratify them affords me pleasure; to aid their improvement, so far as I am able, is my duty; and therefore they are published.

The leading design of the Course is laid open in the commencement of the first Lecture. It embraces subjects which it is neither customary nor proper frequently to discuss in the pulpit, but which are sufficiently important to justify their occasional introduction. The present state of the Christian world makes it sometimes a duty to buckle on the harness of controversy, though it is far more pleasant, and more directly useful, to beat the swords and spears of theological warfare into the ploughshares and pruning-hooks of moral cultivation.

The Lectures were composed for the pulpit, not for the press, and are, as to manner, so much more adapted for the former than for the latter, that every reader of taste will be frequently displeased, perhaps disgusted, unless he will, in imagination, become a hearer. To transmute their substance from the one form into the other would have demanded more labour than the occasion required, or than the materials were worth; and, after all, might have proved a vain attempt to assimilate them to a different species of composition, for the excellence of a sermon is (in the author's opinion, at least) widely different from that of an essay. The former is to be heard, the latter to be read; the one is heard once, the other may be repeatedly perused; the one passes rapidly, with attention sometimes fixed, and sometimes flagging; while the eye and mind may dwell at pleasure on the different parts of the other, and contemplate their mutual adaptation and dependence, and their combination into an harmonious whole. To attempt to bestow on one the qualities which constitute excellence in the other, is like substituting the minute correctness and high finish of the cabinet painting for the daubing of the dramatic scene, where their existence would only be perceived by a diminution of the intended effect. Controversial sermons are, I apprehend, merely *speeches to set people thinking*; and this notion will account for the appearance of what many will deem faults in the following Lectures, which I was not solicitous to avoid or expunge. This object has been kept constantly in view, and every thing sacrificed to it, save truth and charity. All minds have key-notes, to touch which I have thrown my hand rapidly along the instrument, careless about sometimes striking a discordant note, so that I might awake in others strains of intellectual melody more rich and powerful than my own execution could produce, or my own compass reach.

In preparing the Lectures for the press, some additions have been made (chiefly to Lectures III. and V.) of arguments or illustrations which were unnecessary in the delivery, as the same subjects had been introduced to the hearers on other occasions. The Appendix to Lecture VI., and the Notes, are added in hope that they may promote the general design of the whole, and direct the minds of the young especially, and of those who have but limited means of acquiring information, to useful works, and interesting subjects for reflection. To prevent misapprehension or perversion, the author has only to add, that for the opinions expressed or hinted, in either the Lectures or Notes, he alone is responsible. So far as they are true or useful, may the blessing of Almighty God give them success and influence!

HACKNEY ROAD,
February 24, 1819.

Lecture I.—On Antichrist.

"This is that spirit of Antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come" (1 John iv. 3).

The Creator of the world is the author of Christianity; and the history of nature bears a striking analogy to that of revelation. When the earth was formed, and the heavens were stretched abroad, and light, life, and reason were produced, the Father of the universe blessed his work, and pronounced it good. All was magnificent, lovely, and harmonious; a vast theatre for holy deeds and high enjoyments; where man was to perform his allotted part of good, and reap his recompense of bliss; or be prepared for some still nobler abode in his heavenly Parent's mansion. Soon this sunshine faded into darkness. Evil, both natural and moral, advanced to a conflict, apparently successful, with human virtue and happiness, and gained a triumphant and extensive prevalence. Yet evil is of temporary duration, admitted into the plans of God on account of the good to which it is subservient, destined to destruction, and to be succeeded by an otherwise unattainable degree of universal felicity. So when the new creation, the moral world of Christianity, was formed, it exhibited a scene of surpassing loveliness. There was the light of truth, the life of godliness, the joy of immortality. It was a system of knowledge and devotion, of purity, liberty, and benevolence. But no sooner was the gospel widely diffused, than it began to be corrupted. A spurious philosophy transformed its doctrines into mysteries; false shame attempted to wipe away the reproach of the cross, by elevating the lowly prophet of Nazareth to the honours of deification; while avarice and ambition superseded its godly discipline to make way for wealth, splendour, tyranny, and persecution. Apostasy in the church, like evil in the universe, is permitted of God for wise and good purposes; its limits are fixed, its termination is certain, and its destruction preparatory to the final prevalence of pure religion, the reign of Christ, in truth, peace, and piety, over all nations. To illustrate this fact is the design of the course of Lectures which has been announced to you. They will exhibit error and evil, rising, prevailing, declining, and perishing, *in Christianity,* thus leaving room for the free operations of its original principles in destroying evil in the world, and providing for the extent, facility, and success of those operations, that the bright visions of goodness and of glory, connected by the prophets with the Messiah whose coming they foretold, may at length be realised. Pursuing this object, we shall naturally pass from a general view of the corruptions of the gospel, which reached their greatest height in Popery, to a consideration of the dominant religion of our own country; from Church-of-Englandism to Nonconformity and Religious Liberty, which are the atmosphere in which inquiry breathes most freely, and where truth has revived; and having attempted to delineate Unitarianism, the genuine doctrine (according to our convictions) of Christ and Revelation, and shown the obstacles to its progress, the means by which, if at all, it must succeed, and the probability of their being effectual, we shall pass on to evince the power of renovated Christianity to reach the universality for which it is adapted and designed; to destroy in its triumphal career Superstition, Slavery, and War; and to conduct mankind to that high state of improvement which, as it is promised by prophecy, shall be secured by the resistless agency of Divine Providence. It is, therefore, by no means my intention that each Lecture should contain a full and distinct consideration of the subject announced, but only such a view of it as belongs to the general design of the whole course. That design embraces topics of great interest, importance, and utility, which are well calculated to strengthen our piety towards God, expand our benevolence to man, and multiply our purest enjoyments, by filling the mind with animating anticipations of futurity.

The religion which was taught by the apostles, consisting of a few plain facts relative to the character of God, the mission of Jesus, and a judgment to come, together with a refined code of morals, and a judicious employment of the social principle for the purposes of instruction and correction, was remarkable for its power; and it was powerful only for good. To render it mischievous, a previous corruption was indispensable. They foresaw such a corruption, and shuddered at the already nascent existence and future dominion and enormities of *Antichrist.* Our first inquiry is into the meaning of that term, and the marks and extent of the apostasy designated by it in the New Testament.

The interpretation of prophecy is now attended with many difficulties which seem not to have been felt by the early Christians. This fact may be attributable not only to their familiarity with the language and emblematic style in which the prophecies were delivered, but probably also to their possessing traditionary expositions of high authority, and having the advantage besides of the oral commentaries of many who were themselves occasionally gifted with inspiration. Hence certain parts of scripture are now considered obscure, and generally neglected, which then were commonly read, and readily understood. Some of the predictions of Daniel belong to this class. The assumption by Christ of the title of *Son of Man*, from that book, would recommend it to the attention of the apostles and first disciples. They read there the promise of his spiritual sovereignty over the whole earth (Dan. vii. 14): "And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." And thence also they derived the idea of a hostile ecclesiastical power, which was the subject of general attention and expectation even before it was more clearly predicted by Paul and John. This power was to rise out of the Roman empire. He (vers. 21, 22) "made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom." It is also said (vers. 25, 26), "And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and destroy it unto the end."* Other predictions of Daniel, though attended with greater difficulty, belong to the same subject. They are the foundations of those contained in the New Testament; but the latter are, to us at least, of a much more intelligible character. After the ascension of Jesus, at what precise time

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* "We must compute the time," observes Bishop Newton, "according to the nature and genius of the prophetic language. *A time*, then, *and times*, *and half a time*, or three years and a half; and the ancient Jewish year, consisting of twelve months, and each month of thirty days, *a time*, *and times*, *and half a time*, or three years and a

half, are reckoned in the Revelation (xi. 2, 3, xii. 6, 14) as equivalent to forty and two months, or 1260 days; and a day, in the style of the prophets, is a year;—so long Antichrist, or the little horn, will continue; but from what point of time the commencement of these 1260 years is to be dated, is not so easy to determine. It should seem that they are to be computed from the full establishment of the power of the Pope."

This prediction does appear to be justly referred to the Papal power *exclusively;* but those in the New Testament demand a much wider application, to render them at all consistent. It was not the object of these Lectures to offer a minute and critical interpretation of the prophecies in question, but to take some general views of the apostasy, which might be interesting and useful. The caution (as applied by Bayle) was borne in mind,

"Nec Babylonios
Tentâris numeros."

The very ingenious letter of Mr. Evanson to Bishop Hurd (which well deserves to be reprinted) furnishes a variety of proofs and illustrations of the distinction above alluded to, and of the leading object of the first Lecture.

"With respect to Daniel, it must be remarked, that if we except the celebrated prediction of the seventy weeks, the *avowed* objects of all his prophecies are the great revolutions of civil government under the four universal monarchies of Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome. It is, therefore, reasonable to conclude that no circumstances are introduced by the prophet but such as coincide, or are necessarily connected with, the main scope of his predictions. Now, since the ten horns of his fourth visionary beast are declared to be emblems of the many separate kingdoms into which this prophet, so many ages before the event, repeatedly foretold that the European Roman Empire would be divided, it will readily be granted that *the little horn,* representing a temporal principality arising upon the ruins of some of the various governments into which the body of the empire was at first broken, differing from the other kingdoms of the West, and though *little,* that is, inferior to the other principalities in power, yet assuming a tone and deportment more arrogant than any of them, blaspheming the Deity, and persecuting conscientious Christians,—is a very just and exact type of the Roman hierarchy, and applicable to no other hierarchy upon earth, because none other ever acquired to itself an independent civil dominion. But then it is to be observed, that the Church of Rome, as described in this prophecy, within the limits of its own temporal jurisdiction, that is, as far as its local situation is concerned, is itself one of the disjointed members of the old Roman Empire, a horn of the emblematic beast, described both it is impossible to ascertain, but perhaps earlier than is generally supposed, he was commissioned by his Father to communicate to believers, through the apostle John, a prophetic history of his church, in a series of extraordinary visions recorded in the Revelation. Here we have a de-

in this vision and in the Revelation of St. John. It cannot, therefore, in respect of its local situation, be considered, much less *exclusively* considered, as the antitype of the woman represented by the apostle riding upon that very beast, that is, supported by all the European princes, of whom the Roman hierarchy is one. Nor can the exaltation of the Bishop of Rome to the throne of civil power, which is clearly one of the chief subjects of this prophecy, any otherwise assist us in determining the era of that universal apostasy from the true religion of the gospel predicted by the prophets of the new covenant, than as it affords us a very convincing proof of its having taken place previously to that event; because, without a long and general *falling away*, both of pastors and people, from the spirit and principles of Christianity, ecclesiastical ambition could never have aimed at, much less have attained, so high a pinnacle of worldly greatness."

The liberal divines of the Church of England, as Law, Jortin, Blackburne, &c., have seen and allowed that the spirit of Antichrist has deeply infected Protestant Churches, and many Dissenters have made the same concession, even as to their own societies. An American divine, whose notions were sufficiently orthodox, asks, "Where can the church be found which is thoroughly purged from these abominations? Some churches may be more pure, and may have proceeded farther in a reformation, than others; but none are wholly clear of an antichristian spirit, and the fruits of it." See *A Treatise on the Millennium*, by Dr. Hopkins, Pastor of the first Congregational Church in Newport, Rhode Island.

Good Dr. Hopkins could not exactly satisfy himself, any more than Bishop Newton, as to the time when the Millennium shall commence: for, as he observes of the Bishop of Rome, "As this beast rose gradually, from step to step, till he became a *beast* in the highest and most proper sense, this involves the subject in some degree of uncertainty." But he had a very clear perception of its blessings, apparently suggested in some particulars by present inconveniences. Thus he complains of the "nuisance" of "huge rocks and stones," which would then be applied to mending the roads. "Then, in a literal sense, the valleys shall be filled, and the mountains and hills made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways smooth, *to render travelling more convenient and easy*." Another of his anticipations is of a more professional nature: "Then public teachers will be eminently burning and shining lights,—*and the hearers will be all attention*." The work commences with a very friendly address "to the people who shall live in the days of the Millennium," to inform them what is now thought of them, and he very properly and modestly assures them, "all is humbly submitted to your better judgment."

scription (chap. xiii.) minutely corresponding with that of Daniel, and afterwards (chap. xvii.) a delineation of the apostasy, as "a woman sitting upon a scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns; and the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: and upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth." She is also described as "committing fornication with the kings of the earth; ruling over multitudes and nations; and drunk with the blood of saints and martyrs." These additions to the original prophecy of Daniel were, probably, commonly known and discussed among Christians; for John writes of *Antichrist* as a familiar subject, and Paul refers, in his epistle to the Thessalonians, to earlier communications. The term itself only occurs in the epistles of John. It may mean, *opposed to Christ*, or *instead of Christ*. These meanings are indeed coincident, and lead us directly to the essence of the apostasy, which consisted in usurping the spiritual authority of Christ. He is the only Lord of faith and practice; and authority set up instead of his, is, in fact, in opposition. It first occurs in 1 John ii. 18, 19: "As ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now are there many Antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us." It is also introduced in ver. 22: "Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is Antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son." In the text (and in the second epistle), it is applied to those who did "not confess Jesus Christ come in the flesh," with the remark, "Ye have heard that it should come, and even now already is it in the world." We learn from these texts that the term does not designate any particular church, or man, or set of men, but a spirit or system, which had its birth in the days of the apostles, and which, wherever it exists, corrupts the gospel in its doctrines, design, and influence. Many theologians have applied the term peculiarly and solely to the Church of Rome. This restriction is wholly unwarranted by, and inconsistent with, the New-Testament delineation of the apostasy.

That church bears its marks, but not alone. In different degrees of vividness, they are visible on the eastern as well as western churches; before the existence of what is properly called Popery, as well as after; and in the national churches which have abandoned, as in those that have remained in, that communion. There are two predictions by Paul, which it is necessary to quote at length, in addition to those already mentioned. The first is introduced to warn the Thessalonians against an erroneous notion, that the coming of Christ was at hand. 2 Thess. ii. 1-12: "Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and *by* our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come,* except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth, that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth *will let* until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: *even him,* whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." The other is in 1 Tim. iv. 1-5: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils [demons]; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God *is* good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer."

Here is a set of distinguishing marks which, wherever they are found, and so far as they are found, indicate the presence of Antichrist. I do not mean that some of them may not exist in particular churches without others; that there may not frequently be much good in their company; or that very many holy men may not have been partially under their influence. It is not for us to judge our brethren; but the spirit of creeds and systems we may judge, comparing them with the gospel, without any breach of humility or charity. Indeed, we not only may but *must* judge them, if we would inquire out "the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, to find rest for our souls;" and obey the apostolic directions to "try the spirits whether they are of God;" and "prove all things," that we may "hold fast that which is good." The characteristics of the apostasy are, dominion over conscience; alliance with temporal authority; mystery; idolatrous worship; blasphemy; hypocrisy, deceit, and affected austerity; and persecution. Antichrist, therefore, is such a personification of evil in the church as Satan is in the world. The predicted mischiefs, just enumerated, were at their greatest height, and in their completest combination, in Popery, a short time before the Reformation; but they had an embryo existence in the apostolic age; have contaminated the whole, or nearly the whole, of the professed Christian church; wherever found, should be reprobated; and apparently are fated, at no very distant period, to be abolished, preparatory to the conversion of the Jews, and the universal diffusion of genuine Christianity.

The great and leading evil, which may be considered as the source from which the rest flow, or the soul by which they are animated, is a *usurped authority over faith and conscience.* A voice from heaven proclaimed of Jesus, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him." He is declared to be "the author and finisher of faith." All human authority in matters of religion, all dictation of what is to be believed or done by Christians, as such, is rebellion against his supremacy, and whenever admitted, has proved the fertile source of error, confusion, and persecution. The apostles were aware of this tendency, and pointedly disclaimed spiritual authority. "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus, the Lord." "Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy." They reminded the elders of churches, that they were not "lords over God's heritage." The meek and lowly Jesus vindicated this supremacy as his peculiar dignity and right. "Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. Be not ye called rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your Father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven." Such precepts as these, which, far from being so unimportant as they are sometimes considered, have a vital connection with the authority of revealed religion, and its intellectual and moral influence, have been grossly and generally violated,—by the powers which Councils, beginning with that of Nice, in the fourth century, have arrogated to themselves over the church; by the pretensions of the Patriarchs of the East, and the Bishops of Rome in the West, who assumed the title of Pope, or Father; by the English Episcopacy, in forgetting that Christ was the sole Head of the church, and bestowing that appellation, with correspondent powers, on the profligate, licentious, and tyrannical Henry VIII.; by the Presbyterian divines, in imposing their Confession and Catechism; and by the Diotrephes of the Meeting-house, who, by making his own faith the standard of Christianity, and its profession the term of communion, emulates, according to his station and ability, the possessor of the triple crown.

The primitive church was composed of persons united merely by the acknowledgment that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, a divinely commissioned Teacher, whose instructions each was to interpret for himself. This allowed great room for diversity of opinion, and such diversity actually existed; but while they exercised mutual charity, and none attempted to set up their own faith as a standard, things went on very well. Their bishops and elders were designed not more for the purposes of instruction, than for those of worship and discipline. The first evil was the elevation of these officers into a separate, dignified, and endowed class. The wealth of the world, and the speculations of the philosophers, flowed into the church, destroying alike simplicity of manners, faith, and worship. Then came new doctrines, and new methods of stating and enforcing doctrine, by creeds, anathemas, and decisions of councils: ecclesiastical power reared its head; heretics (all who believed differently from the strongest party) were driven from communion, consigned to future and endless punishment, and the strong arm of imperial authority was invoked to crush them; the Bible became a prohibited book; proud man "sat in the temple of God, as God," and dispensed the pardon of sins, and fixed the terms of everlasting life. The Reformation left the principle of these enormities, though its extravagancies were pruned. Churches still tell you what you must find in the Bible, though you are allowed to read it. Even Dissenters play their little game of tyranny, and make Christians pass to the Lord's table through the pool of baptism, or under the forks of the Assembly's Catechism.* All this is not more unchristian than pernicious. Mental liberty is essential to mental strength. That a man does not think for himself in religion, not only keeps him ignorant, but it makes him slavish, bigoted, and subservient to the bad designs of others; it enlists him under the banners of the principle of evil; makes him a soldier in the armies of corruption, and an enemy of the human race, whose improvement he retards, and whose debasement he would perpetuate.

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* This remark occasioned an attack upon the author by a "Unitarian Baptist," whose letter, with some observations in reply, appeared in the *Monthly Repository* for Nov. 1818. The offence probably originated in some misapprehension, which the appearance of the whole passage, exactly as delivered from the pulpit, may correct. The General Baptists have done good service to the cause of religious liberty, and but few of them can be implicated in, or offended by, a condemnation of Dissenting imposition, pronounced by one who is proud, on this subject, to be a disciple of that illustrious ornament of their denomination, Robert Robinson. He felt, strongly enough, the degradation of those who, having renounced the splendid vassalage of the Church, could submit to the exaction, by societies or individuals, of creed, ceremony, or experience, as a necessary pre-requisite to those privileges which Christ designed for all his followers.

"Ibis sub furcâ prudens, dominoque—
Committes rem omnem,—
O toties servus! Quæ bellua ruptis,
Cum semel effugit, reddit se prava catenis?"

This subject is more fully discussed in Lecture III.

The next mark of an antichristian church is, *alliance with temporal authority*, which is not only suggested by the expression, "with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication" (Rev. xvii. 2), but appears from the whole description, in which the beast represents the civil powers, and the woman is an emblem of the corrupt church supported by their interposition. The Romish Church had the extraordinary address, or fortune, to gain for itself a political existence, and become a state. This anomaly is supposed to be the subject of distinct prophecy, and to be shadowed out in the little horn of Daniel's fourth beast. Other churches have stopped short of such a consummation; but the subservient connection in which they have rested can scarcely be deemed less pernicious. They are *kingdoms of this world*, established by its authority, subservient to its designs, paid from its treasuries, and armed with its vengeance; consequently far indeed from being the *kingdom of Christ*. By such alliances Christians have lost the freedom of their minds, the simplicity of their faith, the purity of their worship, the independence of their characters; and they have gained the exclusive possession of wealth and honour, a patent to dogmatise, and a power to persecute.

The gospel was distinguished by simplicity; it was preached to the poor, and adapted to their capacities; it revealed many mysteries, or secrets, by which they ceased to be so, but it taught none; on the contrary, *mystery* is inscribed on the forehead of apostasy, and is presented as a test that, however intermixed with the doctrines of Christ, we may detect and discard the corrupt additions of after ages. Secrecy was resorted to by the early Christians, under persecution, in the celebration of their worship, from necessity or prudence; it was retained from policy, for the purpose of exciting reverence for particular ceremonies; and being thus introduced, it gradually pervaded the whole system, until every thing was mysterious, from the most important proposition in a creed to the most trifling article of dress of the priest by whom it was repeated. The senses and the understanding were alike bewildered. Against the Eastern Church, with which, indeed, the notion of Transubstantiation originated, at the second Council of Nice, this charge may be as completely made out, as against the Church of Rome. And was mystery got rid of at the Reformation? Look at the Athanasian Creed; read the Institutes of Calvin, and the Confession of the Westminster Assembly; take any statement of Trinitarianism, Papal or Protestant, Lutheran or Calvinistic, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, or Independent; mystery glares on its front, and enters into its very essence.

The "doctrines concerning demons," of which Paul speaks, very accurately describe that prevalent invocation of saints, which was evidently borrowed from those notions of the souls of dead men, and acts of homage to them, which are so prominent in the mythology and superstitions of antiquity. On this ground, Protestants have often advanced the charge of idolatry against Papists. This offence is certainly elsewhere connected with Antichrist; and Bishop Newton very justly observes, that it is hinted at in the term "apostasy" (*falling away*, our translators have rendered it), which "was idolatry in the Jewish Church, and therefore is the same in the Christian." Yet it should be remembered that the saints were honoured, not as gods, instead of the Father, but as mediators, instead of the Son. There could be nothing analogous to this error during the Jewish dispensation, nor any propriety in defining it by terms previously employed to describe a different offence. It is, doubtless, the demonology of New-Testament prophecy; but where shall we find the apostasy and idolatry? There are two kinds of idolatry: 1st, the adoration of any other being or person than the One God, the Jehovah of the patriarchs, and the Father of Christ; and 2dly, that of a visible or imagined form, even if it be nominally identified with the true God. He is the Infinite Spirit, and any material representation of him is strictly forbidden. Yet some have worshiped his bodily picture or statue, while others adore him as incarnate, existing in a man, whose form may be painted or fancied, and who is besought to hear prayer by his birth, circumcision, agony, death, burial, and resurrection. In addition to God the Father, the uniform and sole object of scriptural worship, we hear supplications addressed to God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, and to that mysterious and complex idea formed by their union, called God the Trinity. For the worship of the Holy Ghost and the Trinity, not even the shadow of Scripture precept or example can possibly be alleged; while that of Christ is in opposition to his express prohibition: "In that day ye shall ask me nothing; verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you" (John xvi. 23).

It is said of the power described in Dan. vii. 8, and again, Rev. xiii., that he should "speak great words against the Most High; and open his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven." Does this refer to the assumption, by ecclesiastical dignitaries, of titles which ought to have been held sacred to the Deity? Does it describe that active malignity which has ever delighted to blacken the characters of reputed heretics, and cast out, not only from the church, but from an honourable abode in the memories of men, those who preserved the "tabernacle" of God in this wilderness of corruption, and who shall "dwell in heaven"? The charge is advanced against the Ecclesiastical State, and the Civil Powers in alliance with the Church. It may be a condemnation of their aspiring to spiritual legislation, and of the manner in which that authority has been exercised. Blasphemy is evil-speaking. Intentional defamation of the Deity is scarcely to be imagined. But we must lament that such creeds have generally been established as tend to throw a dark shade over the Divine perfections. They impair our perception of his excellence, by notions which compress infinity into human shape, and connect spirituality with corporal organs and sufferings; they sully his moral character, and dim its loveliness, by attributing to him actions that would disgrace even imperfect man, and sink him from the Father into the tyrant of the human race.

Pious frauds, feigned miracles, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, are now matters of history, like the other predictions, and but too easily and frequently to be met with.* We find them abundantly in

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* Ben Mordecai, in his *Thoughts on the Grand Apostasy,* introduces a selection of miracles, attested by the Fathers, which is not unamusing:

"St. Jerome tells us, that as St. Anthony was travelling through the deserts of Egypt, he espied a satyr approaching towards him; or a little man with goat's feet, a crooked nose, and a forehead armed with horns, who, in token of peace, offered him the fruit of the palm-tree, and being asked presently by St. Anthony what he was, gave this answer: 'I am a mortal, and one of those inhabitants of the

the fourth century, when the maxim was almost universally adopted, "that it was an act of virtue to deceive and lie, when by that means the interests of the church might be promoted." Of this period, Mosheim remarks, "A whole volume would be requisite to contain an enumeration of the various frauds practised, with success, to delude the igno-

desert whom the deluded Gentiles worship, under the name of fauns, satyrs, and incubi, and am now deputed as an ambassador from our whole tribe, to beg your prayers and intercession for us to our common Lord and Master; whom we know to have been sent for the salvation of the whole world.'

"The same learned father informs us of a great dragon that could suck up whole oxen and sheep, with the herdsmen and shepherds, and swallow them down at once, and that Hilarion commanded him to ascend a pile of wood, which he obeyed, and was burned to death; and that this same Hilarion could tell what particular devil any one was subject to, by the smell of his body or clothes, or any thing he touched.

"Gregory Nazianzen informs us, that Gregory Thaumaturgus not only cast out Satan from a temple where he was worshiped, but afterwards wrote him the following billet: 'Gregory to Satan, Enter;' which was accordingly done.

"Sulpitius Severus tells us how a person was dispossessed by some of the straw which St. Martin had lain upon; and how, after dispossession, he saw the devil upon a cow's back.

"St. Martin himself tells Severus, that the devil appeared to him very splendidly arrayed, and pretended to be Christ; but the Holy Spirit revealing it to him that it was the devil, he declared that he would not believe that Christ was come, unless he appeared in that form and habit in which he suffered; upon which the devil vanished like smoke, and filled the cell with such a stink, as left unquestionable evidence that he was the devil.

"Another time, St. Martin said, he saw a horrible devil, in the porch of a house, who, being ordered to begone, seized one of the family, and running open-mouthed at the saint, as if he designed to bite him, St. Martin thrust his fingers into his mouth, and bid him eat *them;* upon which the devil, fearing to pass by his fingers, as if they had been red-hot iron in his jaws, went out at the other end, leaving———

"Ephraim, Bishop of Cherson, tells us how the body of Clemens Romanus, being thrown into the sea, was received into a temple built by God, three miles from the shore; and how a boy lived there a year under water.

"St. Austin asserts, of his own knowledge, several miracles wrought by the relics of Stephen; and how the bodies of saints, which were discovered to St. Ambrose in a dream, two hundred years after their deaths, cured a blind man; and a maiden was brought to life by a gown brought from the place of St. Martin's martyrdom, whither she had sent it.

"What shall we say to the tales of Johannes Diaconus, in his life rant, when true religion was almost entirely superseded by horrid superstition." Athanasians and Arians, as opportunity allowed, fought with the same weapons, and opposed fraud to fraud, miracle to miracle, and persecution to persecution. While we gladly forget the gross trickeries by which, in dark ages, ignorance was gulled, that it might be enslaved and plundered, we must be allowed to express regret that Protestants and Dissenters should yet retain some traces of this evil. How often, in the recollection of every one, has reputed heresy been assailed with calumnious and forged tales of blasphemies and sudden judgments, got up for the purpose of terrifying men from the use of their common sense on religious subjects! Truth disdains such arms; they are the weapons of Antichrist, and worthy only of the policy of the Inquisition, which, when its victims are led to the stake, clothes them with robes covered with painted devils. Happily, their use is almost abandoned by the more respectable of every party.

Persecution is also sufficiently visible in the pages of Ecclesiastical History, and alike incapable of an exclusive application to the Church of Rome; for though she may have been "drunk with the blood of saints and martyrs," her daughters have sipped, and many of them not sparingly, the same horrid beverage. The history of state religions, which is also the history of what is called orthodoxy, is written for ages with blood. The stain attaches also to the different sects which have only had temporary power. Socinus was a party to the unjust imprisonment of the aged and venerable Davides, for refusing to worship Christ; Calvinism has its infancy and origin blackened by the murder of Servetus; the Presbyterians in this country would have taken the life of Biddle, but for Cromwell; and the Puritans, who fled to America for liberty of conscience, denied that, and even life, to some of the sectaries who followed them.

The following passage, on the propriety of making

of Gregory? Of a child that was brought to life by the buskin of abbot Honoratus? Of a monk who ordered a serpent to watch the kitchen-garden? How Fortunatus, by the sign of the cross, tamed a wild horse? How Sabrinus sent a written message to the river Po, not to overflow, which was obeyed? And how Eutychius, wanting a shepherd, set a bear to lead out and bring home the sheep of the monastery at appointed hours, who did it exactly, as long as he lived?"

Babylon the symbol of Antichristianity, and the impossibility of restricting that apostasy to Rome, while it evidently applies to the opinions, history, and practices of the whole of what has been called the Orthodox Church, is by Evanson, a clergyman who relinquished his emoluments for conscience' sake: "The figurative terms, *Babylon the Great, that great city,* &c., are manifestly opposed to those of Jerusalem, the holy city, the new Jerusalem, &c.; and therefore, since the latter type cannot denote any one particular city, but must necessarily include in its signification every society of true Christians, who embrace and practise the pure religion of the gospel, and acknowledge no Lord nor Lawgiver in religious concerns but Jesus Christ, so the former cannot be confined to any one church or city, but must needs extend to every society, in every nation, by whatsoever denomination they may call themselves, who adopt the antichristian superstition which *temporal* power alone hath established, and alone continues to uphold. In this sense there is indeed a very just and striking correspondence between the *thing signified* and the *sign;* for as *Babylon* was the source of ancient, so hath the *Orthodox Church* been of modern, *idolatry;* as *Babylon* first aimed at universal empire, and enslaved the nations around it, so the *Orthodox Church* first attempted to establish a universal empire over conscience, and enslaved the minds of men; as the despot of Babylon decreed that all who would not worship the image he had thought fit to erect, should be destroyed in the burning fiery furnace, so the *princes* of the Orthodox Church condemned those who refused to conform to the idolatry they had established, to perish at the fiery stake; while the church herself, not satiated with such diabolical vengeance, hath impiously presumed to anticipate the final judgment of heaven, and doomed them in the next world to suffer everlasting burnings; as Babylon desolated and laid waste Jerusalem, led captive the people of Israel, and compelled them to violate the principles of the law of Moses, and publicly to offer sacrifice to pagan idols, so the Orthodox Church hath ruined and enthralled the Church of Christ, and compelled the professors of Christianity to contradict the very spirit and first principles of the gospel, and openly to embrace her catholic faith and idolatrous mode of worship. Lastly, as the Assyrian metropolis projected the impracticable scheme of a universal union of mankind, and erected a common centre of unity for that purpose, which ended in the disunion and entire separation of the people from each other, by the confusion of tongues, so the Orthodox Church, wheresoever it hath been established, hath erected a common standard of religious belief, and wildly and vainly endeavoured to accomplish a universal agreement of opinion and uniformity of doctrine; and the attempt hath ended in the division and subdivision of Christendom into a very Babel of contending heresies and differing modes of fanaticism and superstition" (*Letter to Hurd*, p. 109, 2d ed.).

This view of our subject, though at first it may seem harsh, is really conducive to *charity*. It teaches that no one body of professing Christians is to be singled out and held up for odium as peculiarly stained with the characteristics of the predicted apostasy; but that they are scattered, though in different proportions, over the whole of nominal Christendom. We turn from mutual accusation to inquiry after the portion of the evil which we may have shared, and endeavour to correct it. What Presbyterian does not blush at the stern hatred of his forefathers to Rome, as the only Antichrist? What Churchman should not be ashamed of such a paltry excuse for depriving his Catholic fellow-subject of civil rights? Our attention is drawn from men to systems; to religious tyranny, mystery, idolatry, fraud, persecution: these only are held up to hatred, opposition, condemnation, and destruction. May they perish, and for ever!

Yet it must be noticed, as forming a strong presumption against the Trinitarian creed, that, while in itself it seems to correspond with part of the account given in scripture of the great apostasy, it has undeniably been closely entangled and deeply involved in the progress of that apostasy. That it is mysterious its advocates readily admit, and frequently they avow and dwell upon the fact, for the purpose of commanding reverence, avoiding explanation, or stopping inquiry. That it is idolatrous they also grant, unless its truth be established. The men whom Paul describes as corrupters of the faith, and believers of a lie, were its authors and propagators. The Councils which destroyed Christian liberty were held for its defence. The succession of false miracles, which marked the apostasy, was wrought in its proof. The civil establishments, which degraded Christianity, propped up Trinitarianism. It was the faith given instead of the Bible, or subscribed with the Bible. Persecution has been its handmaid. Till very lately, even in this country, to deny it was an offence subject to heavy penalties. All this is ground for strong suspicion, anterior to any detailed examination of scripture upon the subject.

How manifold are the evils which Antichrist (*i.e.* the assumptions and practices which have been enumerated, in whatever party they may be found) has inflicted upon the human race! The pure gospel was a rich source of blessedness. Every kind affection sprang up at its approach, like the flowers at the return of spring. Men learned to love their God, and one another. Dismally was the scene reversed, when a counterfeit gospel was palmed upon the world. The authors of that change are accountable for a mass of guilt and misery.

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, it seemed as if all Europe were propelled on Asia. Christendom was roused to a holy war. The cross decked the ensign and the weapon of slaughter. The minds of millions were maddened with superstitious fury, and a road was cut to the holy sepulchre by battle, siege, murder, and massacre,—ay, indiscriminate massacre of sex and age,—preparatory to religious procession to the tomb of Jesus! What is to be charged with these infernal deeds and passions but the corruptions of Christianity?

What a miserable object is the ignorant and misguided slave of superstition! For him the avenues of science are closed; the affections of benevolence are chilled; he worships an unknown God; he looks for salvation to his saint, and for pardon to his priest; instead of being "a little lower than the angels," he is scarcely above the brutes; reason is absorbed in passion and instinct; he is played upon, and trodden upon, at his master's pleasure: and what has made him—made nations—such *things* as these? —the corruptions of Christianity.

They have also occasioned much infidelity. Man is not always to be condemned for not distinguishing Christianity in itself from Christianity in the declarations and faith of all around him. We may sometimes see a man, of mighty mind and noble heart, entering the lists against the gospel, denouncing its author for an enthusiast, his apostles as deceivers, its records as forgeries, and its tendency as detestable. The corruptions of Christianity have dimmed his intellectual sight, and drenched his soul with moral poison.

We see Christians hating instead of loving one another; separating, when they should unite; conflicting, when they should coöperate; causing the limitation of the gospel, when they might insure its extension; they have burned with the fires of persecution, when they should have warmed with the glow of charity; they have been tyrants by penal laws, when they should have been brethren by the law of love; they have anathematised, when they should have blessed;—and what breeds all this confusion, but the corruptions of Christianity?

Yes; they have crushed the mind of man, and waged exterminating war with truth and charity; they have dethroned the Saviour, and given the sovereignty of the church, delegated by God to him alone, to tyrants, priests, and partisans; they have polluted the temple with unhallowed worship, and bartered the word of God for wealth, or made it a stepping-stone to seats of power. Ought not this evil spirit to be laid—to be bound in chains for ever? This consummation is promised. The Babylon of the Apocalypse was utterly destroyed. The entranced apostle heard the shout of righteous exultation, "as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

Paul gives a like cheering prospect in his prophecy of the "man of sin, that Wicked, whom the Lord shall consume with the breath of his mouth, and destroy with the brightness of his coming." And here is, probably, an allusion to the word of God, as the means by which that event shall be accomplished. The study, examination, and diffusion of the scriptures must be fatal ultimately to all unfounded pretensions, all errors in doctrine and worship, all unchristian practices. It is by the devout study of the word of God that both the individual and the world must be enlightened, reformed, improved, and led on towards perfection. Let me exhort every one seriously to inquire of those oracles, that if there be any thing antichristian in his opinions, feelings, or conduct, it may be destroyed.

Read the Bible, and you will own no Master but Christ. You will see that he alone was commissioned of God to speak the words of eternal life, and that by yourself they must be interpreted for yourself. You will repel the dictation of man, in however elevated a station, as an insulting interference between the Teacher and the disciple. You will prefer the simplicity of apostolic teaching to the mysteries of modern orthodoxy; the genuine creed of Paul, "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus," to the forged creed of Athanasius. Instead of repeating, in the spirit of bigotry, "Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic faith; which faith, except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly," you will affirm, in the spirit of charity, "God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." Instead of addressing prayers to the Son, the Holy Ghost, the Trinity, you will "bow your knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ;" instead of a gloomy and capricious Deity, you will have a God who is love; and for a system which derives support from penal statutes or political patronage, or which exists by exciting childish terrors and shunning or stifling examination, you will have principles which are advancing in defiance of all these, holding on a triumphant course, and shining brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.

The flame of free inquiry is kindled; and while the precious things of truth, liberty, and righteousness will abide its purifying operation, all else is doomed to perish in the conflagration. But this bright prospect belongs to a subsequent part of our course. To delineate the evil is our first and painful task; nor is it useless. Disgust with error may invigorate our love of truth. The enormities of bigotry are a foil to the beauty of benevolence; while the degradation of religious slavery teaches impressively that we should "stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and not be entangled again with the yoke of bondage." Dire as their influence has been, the corruptions of Christianity have less of evil than the genuine gospel has of good; they should endear it to our hearts, as the best gift of God; the pledge of human improvement, of peace and happiness here, and of immortality and blessedness hereafter.

LECTURE II.—ON CHURCH-OF-ENGLANDISM.

"Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?" (Acts xix. 15.)

THESE words are as applicable to systems as to persons. They consist of an assertion and a question; and though attributed to an evil spirit, the assertion was true and the question pertinent. And that spirit, though submissive to Christ or his apostle, was too strong for the priestly impostors who assumed their name without authority. I take the verse as a motto, and, without further application, proceed to the subject of this evening's Lecture.

Comparing the language of Daniel with that of the apostles John and Paul, in several distinct predictions, the characteristics of the apostasy which was to take place in the Christian Church have appeared to be—spiritual tyranny; alliance with temporal authority; mystery; idolatrous worship; blasphemy; hypocrisy, deceit, and affected austerity; and persecution. To these might have been added immorality, but that it is more correctly viewed as a general result of the whole, than as a distinct and additional trait. Certain it is, that the great body of professing Christians have long ceased to resemble the first believers in purity and elevation of character; nor can the difference be well accounted for, but by supposing either that a religion from heaven may become enfeebled by age, and cease to be followed by the effects which it was designed to, and originally did, produce; or that the corruptions of the gospel have materially interfered with its regenerating and sanctifying efficacy. There can be no hesitation in adopting the latter supposition. Even amid the glories of primitive Christianity, the seed of these evils was traced lurking in the churches. It soon sprang up, and, when the apostles were removed, had a rapid growth. After the political conversion of the Roman emperors, it attained a baneful maturity, and spread its branches over the earth, while every fairer flower withered in its shade. It is not yet "hewn down and cast into the fire." We have found its fruits in different sects; and in some behold goodly slips, which, though severed from the trunk, retain many of the noxious qualities of the parent Upas. To recover from that great apostasy must needs be a work of time. Those reformed churches which left the path of free inquiry open, did most towards it; but those which made certain changes, and then stopped, did little or nothing. The essence of the evil remained; and its abolition has been found as difficult as ever. To which of these classes we must assign the sect which took possession of much of the authority, property, and privileges of Popery in this kingdom, will appear from a brief review of its constitution, faith, worship, and influence.

Following the same train of thought as in the first Lecture, in which dominion over conscience appeared to be a criterion between genuine and spurious Christianity, we inquire, Does the Church of England claim or renounce this forbidden lordship? Are its members at liberty to believe and profess whatever appears to them to be taught in the New Testament? No such thing. Their faith is marked out for them; and on almost every subject of interest, and on many of very inferior moment, they are minutely instructed what they must believe. Nay, it is broadly asserted (Art. xx.), that "the Church hath power to decree rites or ceremonies, and authority in controversies of faith." This assumption may be apparently limited by the declaration which follows, that it must not be contrary to God's word, nor make scripture contradict itself: but the limitation is only in appearance; for who judges of this contrariety?—why, this same Church; and of course the contrariety can never happen.*

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* Forgery, that unpardonable crime in the state, does not seem to be so black an offence in the church, which has not only protected such interpolations of Scripture as 1 John v. 7, to which even the early English Bibles affixed the mark of suspicion; adopted creeds, all of which vary from their genuine forms, and one of which is undoubtedly spurious, and is supposed by some to have been intended as a burlesque on the opinions of Athanasius, whose name it bears; but even asserts her authority, and rivets her fetters, by a warrant which there is strong reason for thinking was surreptitiously obtained. The evidence relative to the spuriousness of the commencement of Article xx.,

If there be one thing clearer than another in the New Testament, it is, that Christianity is a personal religion. Every one is bound for himself to ascertain what its truths are, as of himself he must realise its virtues if he would enjoy its blessings. No man, or set of men, are or ever have been vested with the character of authorised interpreters, and its assumption is intolerable. Jesus, and he alone, is the religious Teacher of the world. Yet has the Church of England put forth an enormous collection of propositions, and declared that this is Christianity, and shall be believed.

And what is meant by the Church in this connection? The Nineteenth Article well defines a church to be "a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly ministered, according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same." This is good and liberal, though not very consistent. It is not Episcopacy, but Independency. But has such a congregation power in matters of faith? Have they a right to say to their individual members, or to any desirous of joining them, or to their offspring, You must believe these Articles, to be a Christian, to have fellowship with us, to be admitted to Christian privileges, and to reach heaven hereafter? Certainly not. The very assumption destroys their claim to be a church, and makes them Unchristian and Antichristian usurpers. They have no right for themselves any more than for others. They are disciples, and should leave open

"The Church hath power to decree rights or ceremonies, and authority in controversies of faith," is as follows:

1. This clause does not exist in the Ms. copy of the Articles in Latin, presented to Bennet College, Cambridge, by Archbishop Parker, dated Jan. 29, 1562, and subscribed by the two archbishops, eighteen bishops, and about a hundred of the clergy;

2. Nor in the English Ms. presented by Archbishop Parker to the same College, dated May 11, 1571, and signed by eleven bishops.

3. It is found in a Latin edition printed by Wolfe, 1563, but in the copy used and subscribed by the Lower House of Convocation, 1571 (preserved in the Bodleian Library), is erased.

4. It is not in the Latin edition of Day, published 1571.

5. Of eleven English editions, collated by Dr. T. Bennet (Vide *Essay on the* 39 *Articles*, 1715), printed before 1572, it only exists in four.

In whatever way it was smuggled in, or however smuggled out, if genuine, there it is now, to be subscribed with the rest, *ex animo*.

the doors of inquiry for their own minds, and not at once decree the cessation of intellectual and religious improvement.

But the sense of the members of the Church of England *never was* taken on this mass of creeds and articles. They have never been consulted; for, by a dexterous juggle, whenever any thing of this description is the subject, the Church means either the Clergy, or the Bishops, or the Parliament, or the Sovereign, or one or all of these powers; but never the community. In this case, faith was fixed by the Convocation, passed the Legislature, and was ratified by Queen Elizabeth: they were the Church; and could have given another gospel to the good people of England for all generations.

Another extraordinary circumstance in this spiritual usurpation is, that it was to extend not only to contemporary subject millions, but to all posterity. The one hundred and seventeen Priests of the Convocation in 1562 are to be, instead of Christ, for ever the spiritual lawgivers of this realm. Though many could not write their own names, and others voted by proxy, yet their opinions are the standard of truth, the perfection of wisdom, and the boundary of improvement.

Not fewer than eight attempts have been made at a reformation in the Church since the passing of the Act of Uniformity, and all have totally failed.* There seems to be

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* The *first* of these was the Hampton-Court Farce.

Elizabeth would enter into no treaty with the old Puritans, to alter or reform any thing. They were delivered over to Parker and Whitgift, for correction *only;* which the latter exercised with so unfeeling a hand, and so far beyond his legal powers, that, upon the queen's demise, he began to be terribly frightened at the approach of King James' first parliament; and it is probable enough his apprehensions hastened his death.

He lived, however, to be present at the Hampton-Court Conference, where all objections were happily silenced by the commodious maxim of *No bishop, no king*. The whole affair ended with extravagant compliments to the royal moderator, which some people, who were not Puritans, thought Christian bishops should not have carried so far.

Barlow's account of it might well enough have been called *a Farce of three Acts, as it was played by his Majesty's Servants at Hampton Court*, &c. But it proved to be no farce to the poor, conscientious Puritans, with whom James faithfully kept his promise, viz. that a horror of removing the greatest absurdity, or changing the merest trifle. What must be the ultimate fate of a

"if they would not conform, he would *harry them out of the land, and even do worse.*"

What the Puritans aimed at, and hoped to obtain by this Conference, may be seen in that excellent rescript called the *Millenary Petition*, preserved by Fuller; what they did obtain, was imprisonment, deposition, and exile.

The violence with which the ruling bishops drove on, during this and the first part of the succeeding reign (over which a good-natured man would throw a cloak, if he could find one large enough to cover it), lost them first their seats in parliament, and afterwards their whole episcopal authority.

2. Of those great and wise men who composed the parliament of 1641 (and greater or wiser, or more of them at one time, England never saw), all were not of one mind with respect to the bishops.

Some thought that, particular delinquents being punished for examples, the order might remain, with such limitations as would prevent its being mischievous for the time to come.

With this view Archbishop Usher drew up his plan of *the reduction of Episcopacy*; and had the bishops only contented themselves with the powers reserved to them in that plan, some have supposed they might have saved themselves, and very probably the king.

But they were wiser. They supposed the king was interested in their preservation, and that if ever the crown should recover the prerogative claimed by James I. and Charles I., Episcopacy must rise again with that, in all its pomp and lustre, and in a condition to bring all those who had opposed or should oppose it to effectual repentance; and in this, such of the bishops as lived to the year 1662 found they had not mistaken.

3. The third was the Savoy Conference, 1661. Charles II., impatient to accomplish his restoration, and having some misgivings, suggested probably by Lord Clarendon, that the Nonconforming party might still be strong enough to give him much uneasiness, published a declaration at Breda, giving the Presbyterians to understand two things, which were never intended to be carried into execution but upon the extremest compulsion: (1) A new model of the Church of England. (2) Where this should fall short of satisfying tender consciences, all possible ease and relief, by a large and comprehensive toleration.

Charles soon found that the Dissenters were in no condition to molest him. Nevertheless, as the royal word was given, *twice over*, some show must be made of keeping it. And this produced the Savoy Conference; a complication of sophistry, hypocrisy, and virulence, on the part of the Orthodox, hardly to be paralleled in Popish history.

4. Clarendon's removal from the helm made way for a fourth attempt to reform the Church of England, in the year 1668, in which the undertakers on the side of the Church were sincere and hearty.

system which thus obstinately resists the progressive illumination of the human mind, and the desires of its best and wisest votaries?

These undertakers were, Judge Hale, Bishop Wilkins, Dr. Tillotson, and a few more, with the countenance of the Lord-Keeper Bridgman—men, one may venture to say, of sufficient abilities and integrity to recommend a plan of church-reformation to any Christian government.

"But," says Burnet, "what advantage soever the men of comprehension might have in any other respect, the majority of the House of Commons was so possessed against them, that, when it was known in a succeeding session that a bill was ready to be offered to the house for that end [drawn by Lord Chief Justice Hale], a very extraordinary vote passed, that no bill to that purpose should be received." This strange proceeding is ascribed to the intrigues of Seth Ward, Bishop of Salisbury, who thus atoned for having held in and taken the Covenant during the Usurpation.

5. Some faint attempts towards an accommodation with Protestant Dissenters, by abating the terms of Conformity, were afterwards made during the reign of Charles II., particularly in the years 1673 and 1674.

6. In the year 1675 there was a conference, in order to a comprehension, between Dr. Tillotson and Dr. Stillingfleet on the one part, and some Dissenting ministers on the other; and matters seemed to be brought into a fair way towards a compromise; but the treaty was broken off again by the arts of Bishop Ward.

7. The next attempt to reform the Church of England not only had the concurrence of some worthy bishops, who did real honour to their order, and of a number of pious and learned divines in inferior stations, but was undertaken under the auspicious authority of William III., in the year 1689.

By a fatal mistake, it was agreed that the matter should pass through the forms of Convocation, where it met with an effectual defeat from the zeal and activity of a faction in the Lower House, led on indeed, as was suspected, by some of the bench, particularly Mew and Sprat.

One single circumstance will serve to characterise the spirit and piety of these Convocation-men:

"We," say they, "being the representatives of a formed established Church, do not think fit to mention the word RELIGION, any further than it is the religion of some formed established Church."

8. This account is abridged from Archdeacon Blackburne's *Confessional.* The worthy archdeacon himself afterwards made the last equally unavailing effort, by the leading part which he took in forwarding the petition for relief in the matter of Subscription, presented to parliament in Feb. 1772. The result fully justified the remark he had previously made on former attempts:

"Here, then, hath TERMINUS fixed his pedestal, and here hath he kept his station for two whole centuries. We are just where the Act of Uniformity left us, and where, for aught that appears in the temper of the times, the last trumpet will find us."

Let us now see, by a few examples, how this lordship over faith has been exercised.

The Church has three Creeds, or, reckoning the Articles, four; composed in distant ages, and gradually becoming more absurd, erroneous, unscriptural, and intolerant. The first is called *the Apostles' Creed*. It was indisputably not of apostolic composition; nor is it expressed in terms borrowed from their writings. It is, however, of early date, and strictly Unitarian. The Trinity, the Atonement, Original Sin, and other gloomy reveries of later times, are no part of it. Yet the doubtful tale of the miraculous birth of Christ is there; as is also the marvellous falsehood of his "descent into hell," which is repeated in the third article. That he was buried is a separate clause; there is therefore no room for the evasion that by "hell" is only meant the grave. Whether the authors and patrons of the creed meant, with Calvin, that the Saviour actually was sent to the place, and shared the torments of the damned, or that he went there, or to any other invisible region, as a visitor or a conqueror, there is not the least foundation for the notion in scripture, nor any ground for its belief but mere human authority.

The next is *the Nicene Creed;* which is entitled to no great reverence on account of its original authors. Jortin observes, "The first thing they did was to quarrel, and to express their resentments, and to present accusations to the emperor against one another. If such councils made righteous decrees, it must have been by strange good luck." Orthodoxy was now grown bolder; yet the ancient and still popular doctrine of the Divine Unity is respected by an introduction similar to that of the Apostles' Creed: "We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible." We find in this Creed the Deity of Christ; and yet a subordination to the Father is apparent: he has but a derived Godhead, and is spoken of as suffering; but where is it taught in scripture that Christ was "God of God, light of light, very God of very God; begotten, not made; of one substance with the Father"? The original creed had simply, "We believe also in the Holy Ghost:" and the advance of Trinitarianism again appears in the interpolations which the Church has adopted relative to the third person, who is styled "The Lord and giver of life; who proceedeth from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified." These additions are compensated, indeed, by the omission of the original conclusion: "The holy, catholic, and apostolic Church anathematises those who say that there was a time when the Son of God was not, and that before he was begotten he was not, and that he was made out of nothing, or out of another substance or essence, and is created, or changeable, or alterable."

Last comes that tremendous composition, *the Athanasian Creed*, which is the very sublime of impiety and absurdity; in which contradiction is piled on contradiction, till the sight makes one giddy; where the Infinite Spirit is anatomised, and laid out in distinct persons; where such tricks are played with the Eternal God as jugglers use to make fools laugh: and all is crowned with the declaration that "except every one do keep this faith whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly."

These three creeds, the eighth article declares, "may be proved by most certain warrants of holy scripture"!

Other extraordinary demands are made by these Articles upon faith, or submission, or credulity. The ninth teaches "Original or Birth Sin," the sin of being born; and though Christ said of children, "of such is the kingdom of heaven," the Church declares that there is a "fault and corruption of the nature of every man that, in every person born into this world, deserveth God's wrath and damnation." Justification by faith only (Art. xi.) is said to be "a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort." Had not James been an apostle, he would scarcely have escaped an anathema for asserting, that "By works a man is justified, and not by faith only." Art. xiii. is most uncharitable and unscriptural. It speaks of works done before conversion ("the grace of Christ, and inspiration of his spirit") as "not pleasant to God," and of "the nature of sin;" thus holding up for suspicion and censure many to whom a messenger of heaven might declare, as to Cornelius, "Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God." Art. xviii. is still more offensive: "They also are to be had accursed, that presume to say that every man shall be saved by the law or sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law and the light of nature. For holy scripture doth set out unto us only the name of Jesus Christ whereby men must be saved." What becomes, then, of virtuous Heathens who never heard that name? Or, if their existence be denied, what becomes of the very apostle whose words are here applied in a way which he could not contemplate, and who himself uttered the anathematised sentiment,—"Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him"? How dangerous is it to throw about thunderbolts! How perilous, as well as presumptuous, to attempt to occupy the throne of Christ, and wield his sceptre!

Well might Paley remark of established creeds and confessions, that "they are at all times attended with serious inconveniences: they check inquiry; they violate liberty; they ensnare the consciences of the clergy, by holding out temptations to prevarication; however they may express the persuasion, or be accommodated to the controversies or the fears of the age in which they are composed, in process of time, and by reason of the changes which are wont to take place in the judgment of mankind upon religious subjects, they come at length to contradict the actual opinions of the church whose doctrines they profess to contain; and they often perpetuate the proscription of sects and tenets from which any danger has long ceased to be apprehended."

The professed object of these creeds was, to *avoid diversity of opinions!* Suppose it gained: and if the standard thus erected be not the real gospel, after all,—as, unless the framers were infallible, could not be assumed without presumption,—they are then found false witnesses for God, or rather against him, in his revelation, and suborners of false witness from contemporary millions and successive generations.

If they be the truth, still that truth is held in unrighteousness when not received on the proper authority—that of Christ. What is truth without inquiry, without knowledge, without those moral influences which only attend principles when clearly understood and firmly believed? Let contention rage for ever, if it can only be hushed into the silence of death.

Has controversy been avoided? Let the annals of the Church reply. It has raged there as much as if the Articles had never existed, and on as many subjects.*

Connection with temporal powers is a scriptural sign of the apostasy. To this there can be no plea but *Guilty;* nor is there any mode of considering it, in which it does not appear unfavourable to genuine religion. The notion of an *Alliance* was once prevalent, though it is not often advocated now. Can Church and State ever be independent parties, forming a contract? Does Christianity release its believers or priests from allegiance, and enable them to treat with their prince? There is much more sedition in that notion than in any Nonconformist heresy. If, as is the fact, we consider the Church as dependent upon and patronised by the State, what are the consequences? 1. Many will suspect the whole to be a political trick. Priests hired by the State are a standing army to keep down obnoxious opinions. Hence, in most countries where religion is established, there has been a large proportion of secret infidels among the higher and literary classes. 2. The preferred sect will be selected on account not of the purity or liberality of its creed, but of its fitness for the purpose of the Civil Governor. 3. The great ends of public instruction will be too often neglected for sycophantic attendance on the great who dispose of Church honours. 4. The remuneration of the clergy will be oppressive and unequal; proportioned neither to labour nor to merit. These and a thousand evils may result and have resulted; and many of a political nature into which we cannot enter here. A privileged class is formed among clergy and laity, enjoying peculiar rights and emoluments, and looking contemptuously on others, to the destruction of political equality, social harmony, and Christian liberality.

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* It was some time ago calculated by a clergyman that there were 500 heresies; and supposing each article fatal to one, still 461 were left unchecked by the Church of England. The number must have increased considerably of late. Such is the inefficacy of the established creed, that every description of heretics, not only those who were overlooked, but those who are anathematised, are among its subscribers; and in addition to every controversy which they were vainly designed to suppress, but which has raged as much in the Church as elsewhere, the Articles, &c. have produced several which have been long and furious. Almost every important tenet of the Church has been impugned by those who have enjoyed her highest dignities: the doctrine of the article on Original Sin, by Bishop Taylor, who affirms that "our nature is not contrary to virtue;" those on the Trinity, by Dr. Clarke; on the divinity and preëxistence of Christ, by Bishop Law; on the descent into hell, by Dr. Barrow; on predestination, &c., by Archbishop Laud and the Arminians; on the Old Testament, as to the knowledge of a future state, by Bishop Warburton, &c. &c.

From generation to generation it has been contested amongst the Established Clergy whether they are bound to *believe* the Articles to which they subscribe! The liberal and heretical party has sometimes taken the affirmative of this question, to procure a reformation; and at other times the negative, to justify their remaining in the Church when such reformation became hopeless. Both as a moral and legal question, it is of easy solution. Paley's chapter on this subject, in his *Moral Philosophy*, might very properly be headed with a Frenchman's definition of casuistry, "*L'art de chicaner avec Dieu.*" Jeremy Taylor observes of this latitudinarian mode, "This is the last remedy, but it is the worst; it hath in it something of craft, but very little of ingenuity: and if it can serve the ends of peace, or of external charity, or of a fantastic concord, yet it cannot serve the ends of truth, and holiness, and Christian simplicity." As a legal question, Bennet (*Essay on the Articles*) produces what he rightly calls "a decisive authority, which would silence all scruples, if the matter were otherwise obscure and doubtful. My Lord Chief-Justice Coke has* these words: 'I heard Wray, Chief-Justice in the King's Bench, Pasch. 23. Eliz., report, that where one Smyth subscribed to the said Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, with this addition ("so far forth as the same were agreeable to the word of God"), it was resolved by him, and all the judges of England, that his subscription was not according to the statute of 13 Eliz. Because the statute required an absolute subscription, and this subscription made it conditional; and

* Instit. IV. cap. lxxiv. p. 324.

I shall only advert to three *Church mysteries*, by way of specimen. 1. *Its Trinitarian Creed*, falsely ascribed to Athanasius, which rivals any thing and every thing in Popery, from which this forgery came, and is indeed a distilled essence of incomprehensibility. 2. *The Lord's Supper*. The 28th Art. declares this to be "not only a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves one to another; but rather it is a sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death: insomuch that to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith, receive the same, the

that this act was made for avoiding of diversity of opinions, &c.: and by this addition the party might, by his own private opinion, take some of them to be against the word of God, and by this means diversity of opinions should not be avoided, which was the scope of the statute, and the very act itself made touching subscription hereby of none effect.'"

bread which we break is a partaking of the body of Christ, and likewise the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ." To which the Catechism adds, that "the body and blood of Christ are *verily* and *indeed* taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's supper." What this means it is hard to say. It may not be quite transubstantiation: it is not further from that than from Christian simplicity. *Baptism* is the third mystery; by which the child is taught to declare (Catechism) that he was "made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven;" and of whom the priest declares (Baptismal Service), after he has sprinkled him in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, that he *is regenerate.* This is either miracle, magic, or superstition. Is it not deplorable that professed ministers of Christ, parents, sponsors, babes, should be brought together in the house of God, to perform such scenes, in which they affix no meaning to what they do, and believe in no reality, or else are under as gross superstitions as those of the wildest of our enthusiastic sects?

The Romish practice of invoking saints is disclaimed by the Church of England; but the worship of the Trinity is retained, and with it, of necessity, those representations of the Deity which are in our view so degrading.

The first article commences with a fine description of the Deity: "There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts, or passions, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, the maker and preserver of all things, both visible and invisible." Compare this with such adorations as the following (Litany): "O holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, three persons and one God: have mercy upon us, miserable sinners. Remember not, Lord, our offences, nor the offences of our forefathers; neither take thou vengeance of our sins: spare us, good Lord, spare thy people, whom thou hast redeemed with thy most precious blood—by the mystery of thy holy incarnation; by thy holy nativity and circumcision; by thy baptism, fasting, and temptation; by thine agony and bloody sweat; by thy cross and passion; by thy precious death and burial; by thy glorious resurrection and ascension." And all this is addressed to GOD!

In *Ordination,* the candidate must profess to be moved by the Holy Ghost; and the bishop, a frail, unauthorised mortal, pronounces—"Receive the Holy Ghost, for the office of a priest: whose sins thou forgivest, they shall be forgiven; whose sins thou retainest, they are retained; in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." Do these parties *believe* that the one bestows, and the other receives, the Holy Ghost? If so, they should speak more respectfully of Methodists, Southcottians, Swedenborgians; and if not, what is the ceremony? When Christ forgave sins, he was charged with blasphemy. There was but one way of disproving the charge; *i.e.* by a miracle, which he immediately wrought. So let *them* do, or allow the accusation. The priest, thus commissioned, visits the sick: he tells the ignorant trembler, "I shall rehearse to you the Articles of our faith, that you may know whether you do believe as a Christian man should or no." If satisfied, he proceeds: "By the authority committed unto me, *I absolve thee* from all thy sins, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."

The constitution of the Church demands some attention. It is a massy and imposing edifice, not modelled, indeed, with Grecian simplicity, but shooting up, like its own Gothic buildings, into towers and pinnacles of various dignity, all of aspiring form—though, while their heads are in the clouds, their foundations press heavily upon the earth, and their shade throws gloom and chilliness around on monuments of death; and all is overtopped by the lofty spire of archiepiscopal eminence; where, sometimes, to finish the resemblance, has been seen only a vane, veering to every breeze of political direction. Truly this complicated apparatus of Archbishops, Bishops, Deans, Chapters, Canons, Archdeacons, Prebendaries, Rectors, Vicars, Curates, &c., with their offices, oaths, emoluments, titles, and subordination, from the poor stipendiary to those who rear their "mitred front in courts and senates," is as unlike as possible to any thing in the New Testament. And though some of the means adopted in Popery to cut off the clergy from the common ties of family, friendship, and society, that they may act more decidedly for the interests of the body, are not retained by the Church of England, nor, indeed, by any Protestants, there is still too much of a separate interest. They are not one with the people, in their opinions, feelings, hopes, and fears; not even with the laity of their own Church. Who knows not that the clergy have a political character; that on certain measures they act together, and powerfully? These are invidious topics; I wish to touch them lightly. Some other charges against the Romish, cannot be preferred against the English hierarchy. The latter is not guilty of the affected austerity of monkery; and the disuse of pretended miracles, if not of forged scripture, has left to sophistry and dogmatism the defence of the faith.*

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* The following extracts will show that the concessions in the text as to lying wonders and forbidding to marry, are made rather to the practice of the Church than to its original constitution. The first is from an article by Mr. Dodson in the second volume of *Commentaries and Essays; by the Society for promoting the Knowledge of the Scriptures.*

"One of the characteristics of the antichristian power is, that he would lay claim, however falsely and presumptuously, to a capacity of working miracles (2 Thess. ii. 9; Rev. xiii. 13, 14). It may be demanded, whether this mark is to be found any where but in the Church of Rome. I will confine my observations to that of England. I apprehend the following powers to be unquestionably miraculous: 1. That of casting out demons; 2. That of healing the sick by a touch; 3. That of imparting the Holy Spirit; 4. That of forgiving sins.

"1. It is written (Mark xvi. 17, 18), 'And these signs,' miraculous PROOFS of a divine communication, 'shall follow them that believe: in my name they shall cast out devils; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.' We read in the 62d canon of the Church of England, 'Nor shall any minister, without such license [of the bishop of the diocese, first obtained and had under his hand and seal], attempt, upon any pretence whatsoever, either of possession or obsession, by fasting and prayer, to cast out any devil or devils, under pain of the imputation of imposture or cozenage, and deposition from the ministry.' This clause most evidently supposes a power in the bishop to grant a license by which a minister might cast out devils; and to restrain any one who should afterwards appear with a divine commission from exercising it in this way. Otherwise, why did not the canon reprobate all such pretensions, in the most absolute and unqualified terms, as most glaring deceptions? How could the Church herself, without the imputation of cozenage and imposture, intimate that she has any authority to grant a license or withhold it, to enable or disqualify ministers in the performance of this miracle? She assumes in this instance as perfect a right as she does to license preachers in her visible human establishment.

"2. With respect to healing the sick, we know that there was an office for that purpose in the Liturgy of the Church of England, in which the infirm person was supposed to be healed by the imposition

As the charge of *persecution* was applied alike to Catholic and Nonconformist Churches, an exemption will not

of the royal hands, and a piece of gold about their necks. The portion of Scripture appointed to be read on this occasion was Mark xvi. 14-20. If this office is now omitted in our Prayer-books, I know not by what authority it is done; and conceive that it still continues, as much as ever, a part of our parliamentary religion; and the gift, as much as ever, a part of the royal prerogative.

"3. With respect to the gift of the Holy Ghost, by means of the hands of the apostles, it was evidently miraculous, and attested frequently by the persons on whom it fell speaking with tongues. In the rite of confirmation the bishop declares, in an address to the Almighty, 'that he (God) has vouchsafed to regenerate these his servants by water and the Holy Ghost, and to give them forgiveness of all their sins.' Then, laying his hand upon the head of each particular person, he certifies him, 'by that sign of God's favour and gracious goodness towards him.' We are told, that what the bishop then does, in laying on his hands, is 'after the example of the holy apostles;' which evidently means, with the same intention, and to produce the same effect."

The Ordination Service and the Visitation of the Sick, on which the writer then proceeds to animadvert, are already noticed in the Lecture.

Queen Elizabeth seems to have been strongly disposed to retain the celibacy of the priesthood in her Reformed Church. That it was not absolutely enjoined is said to have been owing to the interposition of Cecil. The following regulation is copied from *Injunctions given by the Queen's Majesty*, 1559.

"Item, although there be no prohibition by the word of God, nor any example of the primitive church, but that the priests and ministers of the Church may lawfully, for the avoyding of fornication, have an honest and sober wife, and that, for the same purpose, same was by Act of Parliament, in the time of our deare brother King Edward the Sixth, made lawfull: whereuppon a great number of the clergie of this realme were then married, and so yet continue. Yet, because there hath grown offence, and some slaunder to the Church, by lacke of discreet and sober behaviour in many ministers of the Church, both in choosing of their wives, and in indiscreete living with them, the remedie whereof is necessarie to be sought; it is thought, therefore, very necessarie, that no manner of priest or deacon shall hereafter take to his wife any manner of woman, without the advice and allowance first had, upon good examination, by the bishop of the same diocese, and two justices of the peace of the same sheyre, dwelling next to the place where the same woman hath made her most abode before her marriage, nor without the good will of the parents of the sayd woman, if shee have any living, or two of the next of her kinsfolkes, or, for lack of knowledge of such, of her maister or mistresse where she serveth. And before he shall be contracted in any place, he shall make a good and certaine proofe thereof to the minister, or to the congregation assembled for that purpose, be expected for the Church of England; nor has she any claim. Cranmer, her first martyr, but suffered what he had previously inflicted on some unoffending Baptists; penal laws of great severity are but just repealed; Scotland, too, could tell some bloody tales; but waiving all this, the Church has borne her faculties with tolerable meekness: God forbid that some classes of Dissenters should have had her opportunities; nor would I prefer any accusation but of such persecution *as no establishment can exist without.* A certain portion is essential to its being. This is felt chiefly in privations of what is one's right; as, 1. *Property:* Man tills the ground, and from it gets his bread "by the sweat of his brow:" is not that produce his own? But he should support religion: well, he does so,—the religion which he approves; which, though not exalted by the State, has touched his heart, reformed his character, ministered to his consolation, filled him with hopes of immortality, and will, he trusts, be the inheritance of his children, and bring them to him in heaven; yet, as if he had done nothing, his tenth is wrung from him by Church-of-Englandism. 2. An honest ambition to be useful is a disposition to be cherished in every good citizen. Talents and principles should be called into action for the public weal, and honourably rewarded. They exist; there is the appropriate sphere for their exercise; but they are kept out by the exclusive spirit of Church-of-Englandism. 3. This makes a favoured and a degraded class in society; a distinction which is often fatal to friendliness, and poisons charity. In country villages, how many poor Dissenters see their children deprived of education, by the persecuting spirit of Church-of-Englandism, unless they be also taught a religion their parents have abjured!

which shall be upon some holy day, where divers may bee present. And if any shall do otherwise, that then they shall not be permitted to minister either the word of (or) the sacraments of the Church, nor shall be capable of any ecclesiastical benefice. And for the manner of marriages of any bishops, the same shall be allowed and approved by the metropolitane of the province, and also by such commissioners as the Queen's Majestie shall thereunto appoint. And if any maister or deane, or any head of any colledge, shall purpose to marrie, the same shall not be allowed, but by such to whom the visitation of the same doth properly belong, who shall in any wise provide that the same tend not to the hinderance of their house."

Amid these censures, let me render one cordial tribute of praise, and that is to the *Liturgy*. Making, of course, some doctrinal exceptions, that is indeed Christian. Excluding holy writ, it may challenge competition with the devout productions of all countries and ages. It is a simple, pure, and noble composition. From the bottom of my soul do I admire it, and, as far as my private feelings are concerned, know of no fitter form of words for man to hold communion with his Maker in. Probably much of it has descended from a very early age of Christianity. However that may be, it is worthy of the best days of Christianity. Bred a Dissenter, no early associations prompt this praise. It is the dictate of unbiassed conviction, which, in such a discourse as this, to withhold were uncandid and unjust; like my censures, it is honest and heartfelt.

The Church of England is but a *sect*, though it may be a fortunate and powerful one. It has severed itself from the rest of the Christian world. Perhaps the question would not be easy of solution, whether it be properly a Popish or a Protestant sect;* for, though claiming to

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* "The Church-of-England man is a sectarist, partly Papist, partly Protestant. He is a Protestant, because he asserts the sufficiency of the scriptures; he is a Papist, because he, in the same breath, requires assent to certain additions to those scriptures. He is a Protestant, because he has separated from the Church of Rome upon the plea of the right of private judgment; he is a Papist, because he refuses the same liberty of separation to his brethren. He is a Protestant, because he maintains the unrighteousness of persecution, when he is himself the sufferer; he is a Papist, because, when opportunity offers, he has always shown himself a persecutor in his turn. The Church-of-England clergyman also is a Papist, because in his Liturgy is found the Athanasian Creed; he is a Protestant, because, though enjoined by temporal and spiritual authority to recite it monthly, he hardly ever reads it. He is a Papist, because he subscribes the Thirty-nine Articles; and he is a Protestant, because he does not believe them."—JEBB's *Works*, iii. 257.

To this may be added the testimony of an enlightened and amiable writer of the Roman Catholic persuasion:

"Of all Protestant Churches, the National Church of England most nearly resembles the Church of Rome. It has retained much of the dogma and much of the discipline of Roman Catholics. Down to the subdeacon, it has retained the whole of their hierarchy; and like them has its deans, rural deans, chapters, prebends, archdeacons, rectors, and vicars; a liturgy taken, in a great measure, from the Roman Catholic liturgy; and composed, like that, of psalms, canticles, the three creeds, litanies, epistles, gospels, prayers, and belong to the Protestants, it has generally been scarcely owned by them; and it stopped so far short of even what they did, and retained so much of the principles and spirit of the old superstition, as to be but of ambiguous character. Were we to review its *history,* the judgment passed in our hasty analysis of its constitution would be abundantly confirmed. It was the creature originally of capricious tyranny, struck out by the passion of Henry VIII., and matured by the Machiavellian policy of Elizabeth. The pride and ill-advice of its prelates had their share in bringing Charles to the block; for which atonement is made by his canonisation as a martyr, and by a service which makes a Christian blush at its blasphemy, and an Englishman indignant at its servility. In his son's reign was the memorable ejection of the two thousand ministers, who laid the foundation of our churches, and whose only crime was being conscientious. Against the tyranny of Charles II. and James II. no stand was made till it was ascertained that they aimed at Popery as well as tyranny; so that the part taken by this sect in the Revolution was but little to its honour.* From that period, much has been gained

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responses. Both churches have the sacraments of baptism and the eucharist, the absolution of the sick, the burial service, the sign of the cross in baptism, the reservation of confirmation and order to bishops. the difference of episcopal and sacerdotal dress, feasts and fasts. Without adopting all the general councils of the Church of Rome, the Church of England has adopted the first four of them; and without acknowledging the authority of the early fathers, the English divines of the Established Church allow them to be entitled to a high degree of respect. On the important article of the eucharist, the language of the Thirty-nine Articles sounds very like the doctrine of the Church of Rome."—BUTLER's *Historical Account of the Confessions of Faith of the Roman Catholic, Greek, and principal Protestant Churches.*

* The greatest statesman of modern times has described the views of the faction to which the Nonconformists, from a blind and bigoted hatred of Popery, sacrificed the cause of religious liberty, so as to throw great light on that and other periods of English history:

"The general character of the party at this time appears to have been a high notion of the king's constitutional power, to which was superadded a kind of religious abhorrence of all resistance to the monarch, not only in cases where such resistance was directed against the lawful prerogative, but even in opposition to encroachments which the monarch might make beyond the extended limits which they assigned to his prerogative. But these tenets, and, still more, the principle of conduct naturally resulting from them, were confined to to religious liberty; but the State has given it, and not to oppose is the highest merit which can be claimed for the Church. Now, are these altogether the linemeants of pure Christianity? Some things may be good; but what would one of the first converts, raised from the dead, say on beholding the whole?—"Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?"

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the civil, as contradistinguished from the ecclesiastical polity of the country. In church matters, they neither acknowledged any very high authority in the crown, nor were they willing to submit to any royal encroachment on that side; and a steady attachment to the Church of England, with a proportionable aversion to all Dissenters from it, whether Catholic or Protestant, was almost universally prevalent among them. A due consideration of these distinct features in the character of a party so powerful in Charles's and James's time, and even when it was lowest (that is, during the reigns of the two first princes of the house of Brunswick) by no means inconsiderable, is exceedingly necessary to the right understanding of English history. It affords a clue to many passages otherwise unintelligible. For want of a proper attention to this circumstance, some historians have considered the conduct of the Tories in promoting the Revolution as an instance of great inconsistency. Some have supposed, contrary to the clearest evidence, that their notions of passive obedience, even in civil matters, were limited, and that their support of the government of Charles and James was founded upon a belief that those princes would never abuse their prerogative for the purpose of introducing arbitrary sway. But this hypothesis is contrary to the evidence both of their declaration and their conduct. Obedience without reserve, an abhorrence of all resistance, as contrary to the tenets of their religion, are the principles which they professed in their addresses, their sermons, and their decrees at Oxford; and surely nothing short of such principles could make men esteem the latter years of Charles II. and the opening of the reign of his successor an era of national happiness and exemplary government. Yet this is the representation of that period which is usually made by historians and other writers of the Church party. 'Never were fairer promises on one side, nor greater generosity on the other,' says Mr. Echard. 'The king had as yet in no instance invaded the rights of his subjects,' says the author of the *Caveat against the Whigs*. Thus, as long as James contented himself with absolute power in civil matters, and did not make use of his authority against the Church, every thing went smooth and easy; nor is it necessary, in order to account for the satisfaction of the parliament and people, to have recourse to any implied compromise, by which the nation was willing to yield its civil liberties as the price of retaining its religious constitution. The truth seems to be, that the king, in asserting his unlimited power, rather fell in with the humour of the prevailing party, than offered any violence to it. Absolute power in civil matters, under the specious names of monarchy and prerogative, formed a most essential part of the Tory creed; but the

To conclude: designing men, even in the present day, have dared to represent dissent from the Church as synonymous with disaffection to the State. It is a foul calumny. The sternest and sturdiest protest against the one may coexist with the most enthusiastic devotion to the other. England was great and glorious while her religion was Popery. She then reared her head above the nations, outstripped them all in the career of improvement, and soared above them towards the heaven of liberty. The great charter of her freedom was then wrested from unwilling power; commerce and manufactures were raising her citizens, burgesses, and merchants to wealth and intelligence, and placing them side by side with her barons: while from contending elements arose the harmony of representative government. She was great while that change called Reformation was proceeding, or retarded, or subsiding into fixedness, through successive reigns. She then began to wave her flag of sovereignty over the sea; her laws were framed in wisdom; and her literature, splendid in genius, profound in learning, and mighty in originality, advanced with giant step. She was great at that tremendous period when the crown was trampled in the dust, a regal head fell on the scaffold, and Cromwell sat on an ungarnished throne. Episcopacy was not her religion then. The Church of England fled to the wilderness; the mitre was crushed under sectarian feet, and the crosier snapped asunder by unconsecrated hands: yet then she was great; not a nation but cringed for her friendship, and trembled at her frown. Was there persecution, oppression, or insult on the Continent?—she lifted her voice of thunder, and Europe's hills were moved; her mountains quaked, and trembled to their foundations. And while Episcopacy has been Church-of-Englandism, our country has been great and glorious still;—yes, through vicissitude, great; in adversity and disappointment, in privation and suffering, in

order in which Church and King are placed in the favourite device of the party is not accidental, and is well calculated to show the genuine principles of such among them as are not corrupted by influence. Accordingly, as the sequel of this reign will abundantly show, when they found themselves compelled to make an option, they preferred, without any degree of inconsistency, their first idol to their second, and, when they could not preserve both Church and King, declared for the former."—Fox's *History*, p. 153.

all changes and chances, in arms and arts, in literature and benevolence. The monuments of her majesty reflect the glittering of every star of heaven; and not a wind can blow that has not wafted from her shores some freight of charity. And she would be great, were this assuming sect lost in oblivion, with all its robes, and forms, and wealth, and creeds; still to her would the nations look as to an elder sister of the earth, preëminent in wisdom, grace, and majesty.

Yes; England, independently of adventitious circumstances or predominant sects, must be admired and loved by all who can rightly think and feel; nor would the hand that might not object to pull down the clustering ivy from the oak, whose strength it wasted, and whose beauty it impaired, touch profanely one leaf of the hallowed tree. Oh, my country! land of my birth, my love, and my pride; land of freedom and of glory; land of bards and heroes, of statesmen, philosophers, and patriots; land of Alfred and of Sydney, of Hampden and of Russell, of Newton, Locke, and Milton; may thy security, liberty, generosity, peace, and preëminence be eternal! May thy children prize their birthright, and well guard and extend their privileges! From the annals of thy renown, the deeds of thy worthies, the precious volumes of thy sages, may they imbibe the love of freedom, of virtue, of their country! May the pure gospel be their portion! Through every future age may they arise, as of yore, the protectors of the oppressed, the terror of tyrants, the guardians of the rights and peace of nations, the champions of civil and religious liberty; and may they be the possessors and diffusers of genuine Christianity to all countries, through all generations! Amen.

LECTURE III. — ON RELIGIOUS LIBERTY AND NONCONFORMITY.

"The Truth shall make you free" (John viii. 32).

As the corruptions of Christianity have passed in review before us, it cannot but have been noticed how closely they were connected with ecclesiastical usurpation. There is a natural alliance between error and slavery, truth and liberty.

For a time they may be dissociated; but reason and scripture, history and observation, bear witness that they cannot permanently maintain a separate existence. Freedom of inquiry and profession is the atmosphere in which pure religion breathes, or the soil in which it grows; and which it must find or make, or itself wither away. Hence the subjects of this Lecture are an appropriate transition from the mischiefs and miseries of the antichristian apostasy to the gospel in its native simplicity, power, and blessedness.

The religious liberty of Christian Churches is external and internal: that which they claim of the civil power, and that which they allow to their own members. The first consists in the absence of all interference by the magistrate; in being subject to neither penalties nor privations, on account of faith or worship; the latter, in the freedom of the individuals composing such churches to form and avow their own opinions of what Christ taught, without being subject to censure, excommunication, or loss of any of the advantages of Christian society and fellowship. Both are of great importance. The latter, even by sincere and eloquent advocates of the former, has been too often misunderstood, overlooked, or violated. They are alike emanations from the same principle, the right of private judgment; a right which, as it ought not to be controlled by the civil magistrate, so neither should it be yielded by the Christian to the dictate of a priest or council, or to the decision of the majority of a church: it is personal and inalienable. If the majority of this congregation were to say to any one of its members, "Unless you believe such a doctrine, you shall not approach with us to the Lord's table, you shall not worship with us; we proclaim you to be no Christian," they would be violators of Christian liberty, and, though not in the same degree, yet would be partakers of the spirit that dictated the damnatory clauses of the Athanasian Creed, that brandished over Europe the thunders of the Vatican, or that kindled the fires of Smithfield. It may be said, that when Dissenting Churches exclude a heretic from their communion, they deprive him of no civil rights. True: his civil rights are not at their disposal; they deprive him of all that is in their power—the comforts of Christian society. But has not every society a right to make its own laws? No, not Christian churches: their laws are made for them by their Master; and they cannot legislate without renouncing, virtually, the Christian character. Personal liberty of thought and opinion is essential to a Christian Church.

As many sincere friends of religious liberty do not take this view of the subject, it is expedient to advance some considerations in its proof.

It is very clearly contrasted with the more prevalent notion by the Rev. H. Taylor (Ben Mordecai), in his reply to Gibbon, in a work entitled *Thoughts on the Grand Apostasy:* "Mr. G., speaking of excommunication, says, 'It is the undoubted right of every society to exclude from its communion and benefits such among its members as reject or violate those regulations which have been *established by general consent.*' *Reply.* This may be true of civil societies, but gives no right to excommunicate or banish from Christian communion; because the laws which give a right to such communion are *not* regulations *established by general consent,* but laws established by Christ, the author and finisher of our faith. When the *pure and humble religion first gently insinuated itself into the minds of men,* the apostles claimed no dominion over the faith of Christians. The Christians of different churches were no otherwise connected with one another than as they were all connected with Christ, their head; all of them were to look up to *him,* and not only was every church thus independent of any other in matters of faith, but *so was every individual,* and consequently no one had any power over another in such matters; and they have no more power now than they had at first: I speak of matters of faith, and the right of communion, and the affairs of another world."

A church means neither more nor less than an assembly, which may be either orderly or tumultuous, stated or accidental. In the New Testament it commonly means an assembly of the disciples of Christ, for the purposes of worship and mutual edification, from which none were excluded but those whose immoral conduct disgraced their profession.

Numerous conversions are recorded. The convert, on professing his belief in Jesus as *the Christ, the Son of God,* became immediately entitled to all the enjoyment and advantage arising from attendance on Christian worship, the

Lord's Supper, and the society, instruction, and friendship of Christians. This profession was, therefore, *the only term of communion.* No precept, no fact, can be alleged, to prove that more than this was required.

It is abundantly demonstrated in Locke's *Reasonableness of Christianity,* that this profession alone constituted a Christian. Every Christian was a member, as his abode might change, of every Christian Church. There was no such thing as admission into a particular church, distinct from admission into the general body of believers. The modern practice of refusing such admission, or of defining Christianity, or of making more than being a Christian necessary for Christian fellowship, is altogether without scriptural warrant.

Converts were generally baptised, but not in consequence of the requirement of churches. It was an individual concern, with which they had nothing to do. "We affirm," says Robinson, "that baptism is not a church ordinance, that it is not naturally, necessarily, and actually connected with church-fellowship, and, consequently, that the doctrine of initiating into the Christian Church by baptism is a confused association of ideas, derived from masters whose disciples it is no honour to be. Into what church did the disciples of John enter by baptism? Was Jesus Christ admitted a member of a Christian Church by baptism? Or into what church did the eunuch enter, when Philip alone baptised him in the desert? It is remarkable that this positive law of baptism is not enforced by any penalties, and herein it differs from all other positive institutes. By what right, then, do we affix to the breach of it such a severe penalty as exclusion from church-fellowship?" (*Works*, iii. 170-172.) I allude more particularly to this subject, because the Baptists, who hold strict communion, are the only denomination of Christians who can plead for their restriction any thing like scriptural authority.

These converts might be in gross ignorance or error on many subjects: the apostles were, when first associated with their Master. But when once a belief in Jesus, as the Messiah, was produced, the rest was left for further instruction; and though a considerable diversity of opinions might remain, yet that diversity was not deemed inconsistent with their claim to the Christian character, and all its privileges.

To this argument from facts, no objection can be raised from directions for pursuing a different course in the more matured state of Christian society. No such directions can be produced. The permanent law of religious association is, "Receive ye one another, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God" (Rom. xv. 7). "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?" (Rom. xiv. 1, 4.)

Immorality, persisted in, disqualifies for the purposes of religious society; and for this cause, and this alone, the founders of Christian Churches gave them authority to exclude. They have no right to do so on any other pretence whatever. The *heretic* (Titus iii. 10), who was to be rejected "after the first and second admonition," appears evidently, from the use of that term, the connection of the passage, and the declaration, "he that is such, is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself," to be, not the conscientious holder of erroneous doctrines, but a partisan,—one wishing to form a clan, and raise dissension, and employing means, or pursuing an object, of the wickedness of which he was conscious.

Christians of different opinions are, doubtless, at liberty to associate for the promotion of those opinions, and to exclude from such combinations those who do not think with them. They may unite to recommend Calvinism or Arminianism, Adult Baptism or Pædobaptism, Trinitarianism or Unitarianism; they can then frame what laws they please: but they ought never to identify these associations with Christian Churches, in which they are not authorised teachers, but fellow-disciples; and where they have no right to legislate, nor any discretionary power of admission, rejection, or excommunication.

1. The first violation, therefore, of religious liberty, and which leads to all the rest, is that of particular societies infringing on the right of individual members, by defining Christianity. A Christian Church is only a body of *disciples;* all are to obey the Master, but they are not to obey one another. The majority has no more right than the minority to erect a standard of faith. Those who

cannot, or will not, worship with them, they have no power to retain; but those who can, or wish to do so, they have no authority to reject. He who believes the divine mission of Christ, and acts accordingly, ought not to be kept out of any church professing to be Christian. This was the case originally, and consequently there were neither sects nor parties nor party names. When opinions were made a test, and believers were named from some doctrine or leader, then,

2. Churches lost their liberty—the reign of Sectarianism commenced. Those who agreed as to some disputed tenet had a stronger affinity with each other than with the rest of the Christian body; they united for the sake of strength in this internal warfare. Hence, meetings and councils of their pastors and leaders; and, at length, authority to enforce the decisions of such meetings upon the whole sect; so that the church, which had tyrannised over the individual, was, in turn, tyrannised over by the party. To this succeeds,

3. The successful appeal of some one sect or party to the civil magistrate, who declares that party to be the exclusive possessors of Christianity, bestows upon them wealth and honours, and brands their opponents with disgrace, deprives them of their rights, perhaps sends them to the dungeon or the scaffold. There was but another step in the ascent, when,

4. The Church itself became a temporal power, making monarchs and nations bow to its decrees. This is the mode in which believers lost "the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free," and just in the inverted order has its restoration proceeded. The Reformation broke off so many limbs from the temporal sovereignty of Rome, but left the magistrates of each country lords of their subjects' consciences, and used their authority to patronise one sect at the expense of all others. The Presbyterians countenanced this usurpation as completely as the Episcopalians. The Assembly's Confession declares, that "the civil magistrate hath authority, and it is his duty, to take order that unity and peace be preserved in the church; that the truth of God be kept pure and entire; that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed; all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed; and all the

ordinances of God duly settled, administered, and observed. For the better effecting whereof, he hath power to call synods, to be present at them, and to provide that whatsoever is transacted in them be according to the mind of God." Many of the sects which had not the opportunity of forming this unholy alliance, yet retained a most oppressive despotism over their ministers and churches. These same Presbyterians declare, that "it belongeth to synods and councils ministerially to determine controversies of faith and cases of conscience; to set down rules and directions for the better ordering of the public worship of God and government of his church; to receive complaints in cases of mal-administration, and authority to determine the same." Can any thing be more arbitrary and absurd than the following oath, exacted by the heads of the French Protestants, in the year 1620: "I swear and promise before God and this holy assembly, that I receive, approve, and embrace, all the doctrine taught and decided by the national Synod of Dort. I swear and promise, that I will persevere in it all my life long, and defend it with all my power, and never depart from it in my sermons, college lectures, writings, or conversation, or in any other manner, public or private. I declare also and protest, that I reject and condemn the doctrine of the Arminians, &c. So help me, God! as I swear all this without equivocation or mental reservation"? The *Independents* had the honour of breaking the bonds of sectarian slavery, and claiming the rights of congregations, in which they were followed by the Baptists, and afterwards by the English Presbyterians. They abolished the tyranny of the few over the many, but still retained too generally that of the many over the few. The *Quakers* were the only party among the early English Nonconformists who allowed internal liberty in matters of faith and worship. This drew upon them the reproach of heresy, and occasioned very general suspicion and antipathy: but they needed the admonition, "Thy crown let no man take;" for orthodoxy and despotism made way amongst them while liberty was dawning on others, and have led them to expulsions, the principle of which would have excluded even the illustrious Penn himself. The last step back to original equality and liberty was made among the General Baptists and the nominal Presbyterians; many of whose societies now only require a man to be a Christian—a believer, that is, in the divine mission of Jesus—to welcome him to all which they can bestow of Christian privileges. The revival of Unitarianism has been by turns both cause and effect of this increased liberality of sentiment.

Let it not be supposed that, however kindred in spirit they may sometimes be, I would for a moment compare the evils resulting from these aberrations of voluntary societies with those produced by the interference of political authority in religious matters. From the former any one may escape; but for the latter there is no remedy except the melancholy one of expatriation, unless toleration be granted—and toleration, from its nature, can be but of partial efficacy. The invasions of religious liberty, to which we have already attended, are by Ecclesiastics. Those by the civil power proceed on a different principle, and require a separate consideration. In the notice of this Lecture, the mention of both "Nonconformity" and "Religious Liberty" implies a distinction, and intimates that the advocate for the one is not necessarily the friend of the other. Such we have already seen is the fact. When Catholics, Episcopalians, Presbyterians (properly so called), have been Nonconformists, it has been from accident, and not from principle; by the loss of power, and not by the love of liberty; while Quakers and Congregationalists cannot become an establishment. The real principles of Nonconformity, however, are indisputably those of Religious Liberty, and would produce dissent, not only from the Church of England, but from any form of Christianity incorporated with the State.

We dissent because human legislators exceed their province when they pretend to fix the religion of the country. Society cannot exist without government. It is for the good of the whole that we should have laws, and that their administration and execution should not be left to individual zeal, but be the peculiar duties of persons appointed to that office. This requires the surrender of much natural right—of how much, human wisdom must decide: it may fairly include even life itself, which, when the good of the community requires it, should be offered a willing and a patriotic sacrifice; but the rights of conscience are, from their very nature, inalienable. Man never did give them; he never can give them. The right of believing where he sees evidence of truth, and of worshiping where he finds characteristics of divinity, as it cannot injure society, cannot belong to society. It is inherent in man as a rational creature, and he cannot divest himself of it, till he can recreate himself, and become another being and his own God. What, then, does a legislator mean when he says, You shall believe this doctrine; you shall worship that God; you are born to this religion; we decree that you shall be a Deist or a Christian, a Mahometan or a Pagan, a Catholic or a Protestant, and will punish your disobedience? And who gave you this right? God? Produce the commission, and work the confirming miracle. Man? When and where? None could do it for themselves, much less for others. But you have the power—true; so had Herod (who was devoured of worms), when he slew James; so had Nero (who was assassinated), when he martyred Paul; so had Pilate (who died in miserable exile), when he sentenced Christ; and so had others who died in splendour, but who wait in their graves the righteous judgment of God. You have the power—to do what? To issue the decree? And so you have to decree that robbery is religion, and persecution for the glory of God: so you have to decree that the sun shall shine by night, and the moon by day; and they will as soon obey your bidding as the mind and heart of man. But you can inflict the penalties: yes, and make martyrs of the firm, and hypocrites of the fearful—nothing more. No human authority has either the right or the power to make any system the religion of any individual. We reverence human laws and governors up to this point; but with our consciences, our worship, and our God, they have no business. We cannot belong to the Church of England, because, however mildly exercised, she recognises this claim of man to tell with authority his fellow-man what he shall believe, and whom and how he shall adore. Her Articles and Liturgy have been rightly described, by one of her own prelates, as "a long act of parliament;" a decree of the senate deciding what we are to think of God, how we are to feel and speak in his presence, and by what means to obtain his blessing! Even did they appear to us absolutely true and supremely excellent, we have never delegated, nor can we ever acknowledge, the authority to decide for us that they are so, and to compel us to their belief and use.

If the right of selecting the religion of a country belong to one government, it must also belong to all. It is not more attached to the Legislature of Britain than to the King of Spain, the Congress of America, the Sultan of Turkey, the Emperor of China, or the Dey of Algiers. If it be right in rulers to command in this matter, it must also be right in subjects to obey; and, consequently, right to be a Protestant in one land, a Catholic in another, a member of the Greek Church in a third, a Mahometan in a fourth, an Idolater in a fifth; in short, to be of all religions, or, which is the same thing, to have no religion at all.

Legislators, by establishing a national religion, not only go out of their own province, but invade that of Christ. Their interference is at best unnecessary. What is their object? To tell us what to believe? He has done that by his discourses. To direct our practice? He has done that by his precepts. To regulate our worship? He taught his disciples how to pray; and it does not become them in preference to learn of others. Either he was unqualified for his work or faithless in his duty, or we must find in the New Testament all that is necessary, all that is obligatory, all that is useful in religion, all that will make us good on earth and blessed in heaven. What is to be added to this by legislative enactment?

When a government defines and incorporates Christianity, it must do one of two things: either take it exactly as it is in the New Testament, or injure it by addition, diminution, or alteration. Let us adopt, for argument's sake, the first supposition, and take for granted that all established doctrines are true, and that their relative importance is accurately marked; that every prescribed ceremony is scriptural, and the whole rightly arranged; we should still dissent for this reason,—the authority on which this depends is transferred; a temporal ruler is made a spiritual lawgiver; an uninspired, fallible, presumptuous man is invested with what belongs not to him, and becomes, instead of Christ, "the head of all things to the church." This it is our duty, as Christians, not to sanction. *He* decide what is truth; *he* command how God shall be worshiped; *he* ordain rites and ceremonies!—Why, this is exactly the authority which God gave to Christ; it is an invasion and assumption of that authority. When did he cede that dominion, or God reclaim it to bestow it on civil magistrates? Can governments or nations give to one what God has given to another? Is the gift of God to Christ reversed by a popular vote or royal edict? Or can a decree of heaven be repealed by act of parliament?

But it is pleaded that the intention is not to supersede divine authority, but to make religion more venerable and efficacious by legislative sanction; in other words, to make God more venerable by sovereign dignity, heaven more desirable by wealth and titles, and hell more fearful by fines and dungeons. This is augmenting the light of day by kindling tapers, and the stability of the earth by building buttresses. Could we even overlook this absurdity, still the plea would be inadmissible. The *imposition* of creeds and practices (whatever be said of their being only explanations, having scriptural authority, &c.) is an invasion of his supremacy who alone was commissioned of God to dictate our faith and worship, and who has done so for all the world, and for ever.

This may seem to some too abstract a reason for dissent; but it is, I am convinced, the real strength of our vindication. It is the scriptural foundation of our claims to religious liberty, as the fact before alleged, that power to frame and impose a religion is not, and cannot be, delegated to legislators, is their natural or political foundation. We abjure incorporated religions as inconsistent with natural right and Christian duty. All men have a native equality, which, however they may relinquish it in some things on entering society, they retain in matters of religion. This is violated whenever any difference is made between them on a merely religious account. All Christians are bound to submit to Christ in matters of revelation, and they violate this duty by submitting to any dictation of faith or practice. These are the bases of religious liberty—these are the pillars of Nonconformity—it rests firmly on natural right and Christian duty.

We have been arguing on the most favourable supposition—that the religion established is pure Christianity; but another was mentioned—that it is in some way or other corrupt; and this is by far the more probable. We must believe it to happen, unless we can give those who incorporate Christianity with the State credit both for the perfect rectitude of their hearts and for the absolute infallibility of their understandings. Unless they combine these two qualifications, either of which none but Christ ever had, they are unfit to give us a human transcript of a divine book, a human establishment of a divine religion. It must partake of their own imperfection. Granting the Church of England to be the best establishment in the world, this objection would make us Dissenters. *We prefer a perfect religion in the New Testament to a corrupt one in the Articles and Prayer-book.* Each must judge for himself of this contrariety. It is scarcely possible, considering the number of the propositions expressed or implied, and the practices appointed, in the established formulary, but that every thinking man should find some inconsistency with the New Testament. According to our opinions it is most glaring: for instance, the word of God says, that there is one God, the Father; the law of the land ordains that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, equal in power and glory, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost: the one describes God as spiritual and unchanging; the other enacts that he was incarnate, born, circumcised, crucified, buried, and exalted. Mercy in Scripture is free and unpurchased; in the Prayer-book, bought by vicarious satisfaction: in the one, God is the impartial, benevolent, and universal Father; in the other, he limits salvation by arbitrary decrees: in the one, man, though feeble, is the child of God; in the other, he is condemned for birth-sin, and totally depraved. Divine authority proffers salvation for sincere obedience; and political authority enacts damnation for disbelief of the Athanasian Creed. Did the two systems come to us with equal authority, there cannot be a moment's doubt of our choice; but when we view the one as a divine gift, and the other as human imposition, it were indeed madness to purchase with our consciences the exchange of bondage for liberty, of darkness for light, and of a noisome dungeon for the pure and free air of heaven.

I have not patience to rake together the pettifogging absurdities, contradictions, and superstitions about crosses, and rings, and kneeling, and bowing, and altars, and Easter, and such-like things, which in rich abundance disfigure the practices of the Church, and to one educated a Dissenter make it a matter of some toil and study to drill himself so as to execute correctly the manœuvres and evolutions of divine worship. If men think they can please God by getting up such exhibitions, let them try; but not impose them on others for Christianity.

It is lamentable to observe, how little of religious liberty there has ever been in the world. *Egypt,* the first of nations, led the way in making religion the tool of government, and affixing criminality to Nonconformity. The Israelites were prevented by terror from sacrificing to Jehovah according to the custom of their progenitors. In *Babylon,* the lions' den awaited praying to God, when the king commanded not to pray; and the fiery furnace, refusing to worship an image, when he commanded its adoration. In free and polished and enlightened *Greece,* the wisest and purest of sages, the apostle of nature, the Unitarian of reason, Socrates, was judicially condemned and executed for impiety to the national gods. In *Rome,* one of the earliest laws was, "Let no one have particular gods of his own, or bring new ones into his house, or receive strange ones, unless *allowed by edict.*" Proselyting by force is a part of the religion of Mahomet: and the apostate Christian Church, like her apocalyptic emblem, has been "drunk with the blood of saints and martyrs;" while her regal slaves have proffered the horrid beverage to her lips, in long succession, from the lords of ancient Rome to the restored princes of the passing hour. The very notion of establishment includes that of a difference between some who are patronised, and others who are only tolerated; which subjects the latter to a degradation of caste, only to be escaped by the fortunate convert or the unprincipled apostate. True to the commonly adopted creed, this decree of political election and reprobation has no respect of good works, but draws a line which neither merit in the excluded nor worthlessness in the favoured can efface. It not only deprives of honours and rewards many who deserve well of their country, but applies their property to the support of the very system which denies the appropriate remuneration of their services,—an ingenious refinement, like compelling a prisoner to purchase his fetters, or like the law of a certain country, where the victims of its institutions are sometimes doomed to pay the expenses of the trial which condemns them, and of the scaffold on which they are executed.

Infringements of religious liberty invade the rights of princes as well as of subjects, and seem the result of their being blinded by bigotry, or overruled against their own interest by a faction calling itself a church. Their prerogative is limited, and agents and counsellors must be selected from a party. There may be talent, wisdom, loyalty, and zeal; but their possessor must remain unemployed and obscure, perhaps be driven to seek his meed of wealth and fame in foreign service, because a test interposes between prince and subject. This subservience to a church has ruined many sovereigns; this undue power has been their destruction. It lost Spain the United Provinces. It impoverished France, and enriched England, by that tide of Protestant emigration which so mightily advanced our manufacturing superiority. It made execrable the memory of Henry VIII. With Mary's name (herself an amiable woman) it has for ever connected the epithet of 'bloody.' It stained the brilliant reign of Elizabeth. It made James I. the ridicule of all nations. It brought Charles I. to the block. It made Charles II. the pensioner of France. It hurled James II. from the throne, and consigned the royal family of Stuart to beggary, contempt, and exile. Whatever evils sovereigns may dread in religious liberty, surely they cannot be greater than those of intolerance.

But why should not the medium of an establishment with toleration be universally satisfactory? For this reason, that a medium between good and evil is not so desirable as good unmixed. There is something disgraceful and galling in the term *toleration.* It implies inferiority; it imputes criminality; it brands with disgrace. Admitting the right to tolerate is also admitting the right not to tolerate, *i.e.* to persecute. It is admitting the authority and capacity of governments to decide between religious truth and error, orthodoxy and heresy, pure worship and idolatry. They are no more qualified than authorised, if we may judge by experience. What idolatry so gross as not to be established? What religion so pure as not to be persecuted? Is Christianity true? Its author and founders were dissenters and martyrs. Is the Athanasian Creed the Gospel?

Athanasius was banished. Is Arianism true? Arius was excommunicated and deposed, and perhaps poisoned; and many of his followers were put to death. Are Dissenters right? They suffered long and heavily. Is the Church? Its first primate was burnt for heresy. Calvinists, Arminians, Papists, Protestants, Presbyterians, Quakers,—all have been legally criminal and punished, and all their discordant theories, in different circumstances, have been the religions of rulers. There should be better credentials than these before their judgment is deferred to. What has a Dissenter done, that he is to be only tolerated? He has read the scriptures, considered their meaning, overcome the prejudices of education or the power of fashion, made sacrifices to conscience: and is he therefore disgraced? The Episcopalian himself becomes a Dissenter across the Tweed; he is tolerated there: and why is he there inferior to the very Presbyterian on whom he looks down here? Does crossing a river, or the sea, change religion into superstition, truth into error, conscientiousness into criminality? "Toleration," says an admirable writer, "is a disgrace to those who assume the right of granting it, and an insult to those who are compelled to receive it. For what would you tolerate? Would you tolerate what is right, or what is wrong?—the performance of a duty, or the commission of a crime?"*

But perfect religious liberty would be an *innovation*. On what? Paganism; for thence came the connection of religion with the state: Popery; for thence came dominion over conscience in Christianity. It commends itself, therefore, to the Christian and the Protestant. What are all improvements but innovations? What were Moses, Christ, the Apostles, the Reformers, the founders of the Church of England, those who invited William III., and those who settled the crown on the house of Hanover? All innovators. Or, if the word must bear an odious sense, what is slavery, tyranny, persecution, toleration, but innovation; for "from the beginning" of civil society, or of Christianity, "it was not so." Nor is the experiment new or dangerous. The liberal toleration which this country has enjoyed for ages is a good preparation for it, and on the Continent excited the same dreadful predictions of mischief, fanaticism, and anarchy as are repeated against the nobler system of Christian equality. In many of the American States, in Holland, the trial has been amply successful; look, too, at Canada: Papist and Protestant are there on equal terms; both, or neither, established or tolerated. Each is taxed only for his own church. The stream has here risen above the fountain, and that is given to the colony which is denied to the parent state.

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* This quotation is from "A Letter to the Rev. Dr. Goddard, occasioned by his Sermon, preached August 8, 1811, at the Triennial Visitation of the Lord Bishop of Chichester. By a Layman." In a sermon delivered at the consecration of the Bishop of London, Dr. G. replied to some parts of this work, though, according to the most approved system of controversial tactics, without giving his hearers, or readers, any direction where to find the heretical propositions which he undertook to refute. As he had administered the antidote, why send them to batten on the poison? This sermon called forth a "Second Letter" from the Layman. In both these productions, the claim of every man to Christian privileges who believes in the Messiahship of Jesus; the inefficiency of creeds to secure uniformity of opinion; the innocency of heresy, unless that term be connected with party spirit, and not merely descriptive of erroneous opinions; alliance between church and state; the character of the clergy; and other topics discussed or alluded to in this Lecture, are touched with the hand of a master.

By the first article of the constitution of Pennsylvania, which is a declaration of the rights of conscience, William Penn, the Quaker, gave a new and noble example to legislators, which we hope they will one day imitate. It runs thus: "In reverence to God, the Father of lights and spirits, the author as well as object of all divine knowledge, faith, and worship, I do, for me and mine, declare and establish, for the first fundamental of the government of this country, that every person that doth or shall reside therein, shall have and enjoy the free possession of his or her faith, and exercise of worship toward God, in such way and manner as every such person shall in conscience believe is most acceptable to God. And so long as every such person useth not this Christian liberty to licentiousness, or the destruction of others, that is to say, to speak loosely or profanely or contemptuously of God, Christ, the holy scriptures, or religion; or commit any moral evil or injury against others in their conversation; he or she shall be protected in the enjoyment of the aforesaid Christian liberty by the civil magistrate."

Would religious liberty hurt Christian truth, enfeeble its evidences, dim its brightness, or bound its influence?

No: Christianity is injured by adventitious aid. She stands best alone. "Imposture is destitute of a firm foundation of its own to stand upon. However specious it may appear to be, it cannot abide the eye of the examiner. Reason revolts at it, and revelation condemns it. Its only dependence is upon something adventitious. It naturally turns its eye to political authority, and the power of the sword. Destitute of arguments, it can only force its way by sanguinary laws. These it procures, by all its own arts of fallacy and fraud, to be enacted against Recusants and Dissenters. Cruel laws and preposterous measures are ever in its suit. Injustice is the foundation of its throne. Ruthless tyranny is its sceptre. Incapable of subsisting but by plunder and rapine, it robs mankind of all their rights. At its tribunals, even the rights of conscience cannot be redeemed at a less ransom than that of men's lives. In all these respects, incorporations level Christianity with base imposture. Though the religion of Jesus be the only revealed religion upon earth, and is entitled to build her throne on the ruins of imposture in every possible shape, yet let it not be once said that she ever claimed, or ever permitted any of her friends to claim, to build her kingdom on the ruins of natural justice, and the wreck of mankind's inviolable rights! Let none, either of her mistaking friends or designing foes, dare to affirm that she authorises any description of Christians to build even their purest profession of attachment to her doctrines and institutions on the supersedure of the rights of one individual, whether he be her devoted friend or her determined foe! She is then no more that last and best gift of God to man; that true Christianity, which in the scripture, her only glass, smiles with benignity upon all the rights of mankind" (GRAHAM *on Establishments*).

But religious instruction for the bulk of the people should be provided. Let it, by all means. Who instruct them now? Whose schools exclude half the population of the country—those of the Sectaries or of the Establishment? Who raise the character of the poor by discourses which they can understand and feel? What sort of instructors will they generally be who owe their office, not to the people, but to patronage? What is the fact? Where Dissent is tolerated, is not more knowledge diffused by voluntary exertion than by established institutions? We may read, in broad characters, the importance of liberty to religious light, in those countries where the genuine spirit and tendency of slavery is unmitigated by the corrective of even tolerated Dissent. How deplorable is their condition! There the populace are uniformly sunk in the most abject ignorance and superstition. There priests and people, blind leaders of the blind, sink together into the very barbarism of ignorance. There is the grave of intellect and of knowledge, of morals and of freedom.

And what needs be feared from perfect religious liberty as to the peace of society? Political interference gives bitterness and fury to the controversies of sects, by holding out emoluments and power as the price of contention;—without this, theological warfare is harmless: it neither robs nor murders. Placed thus on equal terms, the passions hushed, truth would be pursued more disinterestedly; charity would prevail; Christianity would reassume her primeval simplicity and purity; and, cleansed from internal corruptions, her professors, by mutual knowledge and examination, united in mind and heart, the path would be again open for conversion, and the gospel would go forth "conquering and to conquer."

Paley's defence of Establishments is comprised in the following propositions: "The knowledge and profession of Christianity cannot be upholden without a clergy; a clergy cannot be supported without a legal provision; a legal provision for the clergy cannot be constituted without the preference of one sect of Christians to the rest" (*Moral Philosophy*, book vi. ch. ix.). This argument is as applicable to Astronomy, or any other science, as to Christianity; and is as fallacious and inconsistent with experience in the one case as in the other. Not one of these three propositions is true; and the argument requires the truth of all. The first and second are disproved by the history of the early Christians, of the Quakers, and of other Dissenters; and the third, by the examples just now alluded to of Holland, Canada, and the United States. Even if true, the conclusion might, and if what has been already urged be admitted, would, be destroyed by the unavoidable evils attending establishments. The first allegation is very unfortunate; as it cannot be denied that the best defences of Christianity which have appeared in our language have been the work of Dissenters. Paley himself did little more than abridge and select from the writings of Lardner. Indeed, the Episcopalian Clergy are most undesirable defenders of Christianity, because many of the objections of unbelievers are true of their system, though not of the gospel. They have felt this incumbrance, and accordingly have succeeded best when they have kept that system out of sight, and written as much like Dissenters as possible. They are like David in the armour of Saul, oppressed by its weight, and shackled by its trappings; while the peasant boy, in the freedom of honest zeal and truth, easily brings down the giant of infidelity.

"Were the book of scripture," says Robinson, "like that of nature, laid open to universal inspection; were all ideas of temporal rewards and punishments removed from the study of it,—that would come to pass in the moral world which has actually happened in the world of human science; each capacity would find its own object, and take its own quantum. Newtons will find stars without penalties, Miltons will be poets, and Lardners Christians, without rewards; Calvins will contemplate the decrees of God, and Baxters will try to assort them with the spontaneous volitions of men: all, like the celestial bodies, will roll on in the quiet majesty of simple proportion, each in his proper sphere shining to the glory of God the Creator. But, alas, we have not so learned Christ!"

Both Protestants and Nonconformists are inconsistent, when they abandon the broad principle of religious liberty. What justifies separation from the Church of Rome but the truth that the Bible *alone* is the religion of Christians; the Bible to be interpreted by every man for himself? When once the Reformers saddled it with their own interpretations, they abandoned the great cause for which they had struggled, and the only ground on which they could safely and honourably stand. If an authoritative interpretation must be coupled with it, who would not prefer that of Rome to that of England or Geneva, antiquity to novelty, splendour to poverty, and the fellowship of nations to that of provinces? In like manner, when Dissenters make and impose creeds, we may ask, Why seek ye "to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear"? You claim the right of private judgment; allow it, then, there where only you can allow or prohibit it, within your churches. Be not more strenuous for opinions than for charity and liberty. If their sacrifice be demanded, it is more likely to be on the altar of error than on that of truth. Ye are brethren: "see that ye fall not out by the way;" prefer the uniformity of love to that of faith, and the diversity of opinions to that of feelings and hearts. It is only thus that a fair reply can be given to the taunts of the enemies of religious liberty. The Catholics have always said to the Protestants, "You deny the authority of our Church, and yet you are dictated to by magistrates and synods." The Establishment has always reproached sects, "You demur to our creeds and articles, yet you have creeds and articles to which you subscribe and submit." And these again say to the congregations, "You will not own the power of associated representatives of churches, and yet each church requires of individuals that they should hold certain doctrines, on peril of expulsion." Where, then, is the difference? This can never be repelled but by all churches having no creed but the Bible, and recognising the right of all to its interpretation.

"Charity," and not faith, "is the bond of perfectness" in Christian Churches. It is melancholy to recollect what excellent men, "of whom the world was not worthy," have been kept out, or turned out, of the communion, not only of the Established, but of Dissenting Churches, by the use of creeds, to the destruction of liberty. How many of them would never have admitted, or would promptly have expelled, such men as Watts or Doddridge, Lardner, Lindsey, Baxter, or Robinson! Our great and good and glorious Milton, the man of whom England has most reason to be proud, was thrust back from that station in her Church which he wished to occupy, and would have adorned so splendidly. In his *Reason of Church Government urged against Prelaty,* he adverts to this fact, as a motive to his exertions in the work of Reformation. "Were it the meanest under-service, if God, by his secretary conscience, enjoin it, it were sad for me if I should draw back; for me especially, now, when all men offer their aid to help, ease, and lighten the difficult labours of the Church, to whose service, by the intentions of my parents and friends, I was destined of a child, and in mine own resolutions, till coming to some maturity of years, and perceiving what tyranny had invaded the Church, and that he who would take orders must subscribe slave, and take an oath withal; which, unless he took with a conscience that would retch, he must either strait perjure or split his faith; I thought it better to prefer a blameless silence before the sacred office of speaking, bought and begun with servitude and forswearing. Howsoever, thus church-outed by the prelates, hence may appear the right I have to meddle with these matters."

This exclusive spirit is unwarranted, disgraceful, and pernicious. The rejection of a sincere Christian from Christian fellowship has no foundation in scripture authority or primitive example. It degrades a Christian Church into a club of bigots. Were it once destroyed, sectarianism would expire. The hostile names, derived from leaders, or peculiar doctrines, would be disused, or at least would no longer describe churches, which would be only Christian. Much would be lost to the cause of a party; but more would be gained for the cause of truth, peace, and charity.

In renouncing an intolerant system, let us not be uncharitable towards the many excellent persons, both Churchmen and Dissenters, by whom that system is honestly and piously supported, as a necessary protection for pure religion. We spend upon that all our hostility; and leave for them only the hearty affection of countrymen, Christians, and brethren. Especially let us render the well-merited tribute of praise to those illustrious Nonconformists, who, whatever may have been their failings, were the sincere friends and bold champions of religious liberty; for it must not be forgotten that the real principle of Nonconformity is that of the right of private judgment, of universal religious liberty; and the cause of the one has generally been that of the other also. From Nonconformity has sprung Unitarianism, with which religious liberty is essentially connected; which rapidly follows or produces that liberty, and may therefore be called "the truth," which "shall make you free." The secession of the two thousand was a glorious protest against spiritual domination. As religious liberty is our noblest heritage, those who have vindicated it are our best benefactors; and amongst these the English

Nonconformists hold a proud preëminence. Their minds were powerful and enlightened; their devotion was fervent; their sacrifices were great and severe; their triumphs splendid; and be their memories blessed and immortal! Their principles, justly stated and consistently maintained, are our glory. They are deduced from our Bibles, and graven in our hearts. They shall be transmitted from generation to generation, a rich inheritance, and last, like hope, which ends only in fruition, till Conformity and Nonconformity alike expire in the universal brotherhood of Christianity.

Lecture IV.—On Unitarianism.

"In that day shall there be One Lord, and his name One" (Zechariah xiv. 9).

The doctrine of the Divine Unity is of immense importance. It is the soul of Judaism, the foundation of Christianity, the noblest discovery of reason, the glory of revelation, the centre of religious truth, the antidote of infidelity, the death-blow of idolatry, the spring of reformation, the guiding-star of free inquiry, the companion of liberty, the parent of piety, the source of light in the mind and goodness in the heart, and the inheritor of supreme dominion over faith, to which it is directed by prophecy, and will be conducted by Providence, in all nations.

There can be but one God. It is impossible to associate a correct notion of the attributes of Deity with a plurality of possessors. An absolute monarch can have no coadjutors. Omnipotence, infinity, and eternity can neither be a divided portion nor a common inheritance. The admission of one omnipotent excludes that of a second omnipotent; of one infinite, that of a second infinite; of one eternal and uncaused being, that of another eternal and uncaused being: all addition or multiplication of divine persons is precluded by the very idea of God, who must be the sole possessor of absolute perfection.

The Divine Unity is not a barren speculation or a solitary truth. This single proposition, standing as the representative of its kindred truths and genuine consequences, is the substance of Christianity. It is the sun in the firmament of religious knowledge; inferior doctrines are bound to it as by the attractive power of nature; they shine in its light, and round it revolve in harmony. It would not be difficult, by fair argumentation, to trace this affinity; but without entering on so wide a field, we would observe that scripture has blended the Divine Unity with whatever it has declared of most importance in faith or practice:—with the fatherly character of God; "to us there is one God, the Father;" "one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all:"—with his unrivalled goodness; "Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one; that is God:"—with the limited and temporary dispensation of Judaism; "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord:"—with the universality of Christianity; "The Lord shall be king over all the earth. In that day shall there be one Lord, and his name One:"—with the certainty of prophecy; "I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:"—with divine homage; "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve:"—with the mission of Christ, and eternal life; "This is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God; and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent:"—with the impartiality of the Divine dealings; "Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also, seeing it is one God:"—with the mediation of the man Christ, and the universality of salvation; "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all:"—with the summary of our duty; "There is one God; and there is none other but he: and to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is better than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices:"—with the abhorrence of oppression, injustice, and unkindness; "Have we not all one Father? and hath not one God created us?"—with the glowing language of devotion; "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, and invisible, the only God, be honour and glory for ever and ever!"* Let not, then, the suspicion be harboured, or the charge adduced, that we overrate this tenet, for we only follow the leading of scripture in raising it to the highest elevation.

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* 1 Cor. viii. 6; Ephes. iv. 6; Matt. xix. 17; Deut. vi. 4; Zech.

The discussion of Unitarianism has been much embarrassed, and its cause injured, by its being mixed up with the private opinions of its friends. There is gross mistake, or wilful injustice, in reckoning as essential to Unitarianism itself whatever is held by certain Unitarians. The humanity of Christ is not essential to Unitarianism. Although differing from most respectable authority, I have no hesitation in deeming such limitation most improper. It is inconsistent with the etymology and meaning of the term, and its historical use. Dr. Price was a Unitarian as well as Dr. Priestley: so is every worshiper of the Father only, whether he believe that Christ was created before all worlds, or first existed when born of Mary. Philosophical Necessity is no part of Unitarianism: to some Unitarians it seems the plain dictate of reason and scripture, illustrative of the character of God and the plans of Providence, a glory around the cross of faith, and a rock for the anchor of hope; but others think it inconsistent with the threatenings and promises of God, and the responsibility of man; and a similar diversity obtains among the speculative of other denominations. Materialism is no part of Unitarianism. Some of us believe that man is formed of one substance, others of two: some that unconsciousness prevails from death to the resurrection; and others that the transition is immediate to bliss and glory, or to punishment, of the separated spirit. The denial of angels or devils is no part of Unitarianism: some believe in one, or the other, or in both. There are certain doctrines which we agree in asserting, and others commonly held which we deny. While such passages as the following remain, to each of which might be added a number of similar declarations, we cannot admit the doctrines to which they are opposed, of a Trinity, the equality of Christ with the Father, imputed sin or righteousness, and vindictive or eternal punishment: "There is none other God but one." "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." "My Father is greater than

xiv. 9; Isaiah xlvi. 9, 10; Matt. iv. 10; John xvii. 3; Romans iii. 29, 30; 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6; Mark xii. 32, 33; Mal. ii. 10; 1 Tim. i. 17. The word "wise" is omitted, according to the corrected text of Griesbach.

I." "The head of Christ is God." "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son." "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." "God will not always chide, neither will he keep his anger for ever."* While, on the other hand, the notions of Christianity which prevail amongst us, of the proper unity, benevolent character, and sole claim to worship, of God the Father; the mission of Christ for the salvation of the world; the necessity of holiness alone for obtaining the Divine favour; a resurrection to impartial judgment; and the ultimate restoration of all things,—are not only scriptural in each particular, but, combined, present the great outline of New-Testament teaching.

"I am the first, and I am the last, and besides me there is no God." "God is love." "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father." "He anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the holy spirit and with power." "The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." "The grace of God, which bringeth salvation to all men, hath appeared, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." "Therefore we both labour and suffer reproach because we trust in the living God, who is the saviour of all men." "Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." "The creature itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." "In the seed of Abraham shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed."†

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* 1 Cor. viii. 4; Exodus xx. 3; John xiv. 28; 1 Cor. xi. 3; Ezek. xviii. 20; Matt. vii. 21; Psalm ciii. 9.

† Isaiah xliv. 6; 1 John iv. 8; John iv. 23; 1 John iv. 14; Titus ii. 11, according to the marginal reading of the received translation; 1 Tim. iv. 10; 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22; 2 Cor. v. 10; Romans viii. 21; Acts iii. 25.

This is Unitarianism. Can it be false? Then what becomes of scripture, for in its very terms, without perversion, are all the doctrines of Unitarianism expressed, and those denied to which they are opposed! Where this is the case, to those who admit the authority of the New Testament, controversy is at an end. Statement is proof; declaration is demonstration; and Unitarianism becomes identical with Christianity. Its refutation is that of scripture and of reason. It is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone." And what shall dismantle such an edifice? Will the breath of man blow it down? Shall it totter beneath the thunders of excommunication? Will it be fired by those flames of inquiry in which perish the wood, hay, and stubble of human invention? Will it fall in the storm, or moulder with age? No. It is immutable truth: a building of God; eternal as the heavens; like them, bidding defiance to human hostility; and, like them too, shedding benignant influences on the vain assailants.

This scriptural proof may receive confirmation from various considerations, which can be but briefly noticed.

Judaism was Unitarianism. It was instituted and supported by Divine direction and agency, to preserve in the world the knowledge of the One God. This object appears conspicuous in the origin, institutions, administration, and results of that singular system.

The Jewish system may be considered as commencing with the call of Abraham. Idolatry was then rapidly becoming universal. The father of the faithful remained steady to the worship of the only God: for this he was distinguished; for this separated; for this rewarded in his posterity; for this promised that his seed should inherit the land, and from him descend one in whom all nations should be blessed. The prayers of Abraham, and the communications of Deity to him, are detailed in many places. Those prayers are addressed to one person; those revelations made by, or in the name of, one person. To him was no Trinity revealed; by him was no Trinity adored. The language of Abraham is, "Lord God, what wilt *thou* give me?" "May Ishmael live before *thee!*" and that of the Deity is, "*I* am the Lord, that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees; *I* will bless thee, and thy seed after thee."

Judaism, therefore, in its origin, is Unitarianism. It commences with the selection and reward of Abraham, for adoring one God amid general apostasy to Polytheism.

Judaism was Unitarian in its institutions. There was no revelation of a Trinity to the patriarchs who succeeded Abraham. Adoration is offered to, promises are made by, the same individual Jehovah. One after another is celebrated for treading in his steps. His posterity are enslaved in Egypt: the time of their deliverance arrives; Moses is commissioned to effect it. "Thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you. This is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations." We are not then left to infer, from its not being recorded, that in the intermediate time no revelation of some other person or persons in the Godhead had been made: it is here directly negatived, not only for the past, but for futurity. The laws afterwards given are such as from this we might expect. So far as they relate to worship, their great object is to inculcate that there is but one person to whom it is due. "I am the Lord thy God, that brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. Thou shalt worship no other God, for the Lord, whose name is jealous, is a jealous God. Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord." The worship instituted on Mount Sinai was, like that of the patriarchs, the worship of one God. It is not addressed to a Trinity; contains no recognition of a Trinity; but effectually and absolutely excludes that, and every other notion of a divine plurality.

Judaism was Unitarian in its administration. The laws of Moses were not designed, like Christianity, to work their way among other nations, and become universal. Their design was to preserve in Judea a certain degree of religious knowledge till the Messiah came. For this, the laws were aided by inspired men, raised up from time to time to restore and preserve their purity. Till within three hundred years, perhaps less, before Christ, there was a succession of prophets. The doctrines inculcated by these men are not unimportant in the present controversy. They were the guardians and expounders of the law of Moses. If that law was erroneously supposed to teach the proper unity of God, they would have exposed the error. If the Trinity was there obscurely taught, and had been overlooked, they would have brought it to light. If the Jews in Moses' time were not fit for the reception of that mystery, and were to be gradually prepared for it, they would have made the revelation. Have they exposed such an error? Have they offered such an interpretation? Have they unfolded such a discovery? Nothing like it. Elijah by a miracle rescued the people from the worship of Baal; and they exclaimed, "The Lord, *he* is God!" Was this miracle wrought to turn them from idolatry, one fatal error, to Unitarianism, another fatal error? And was a prophet satisfied with such a triumph? The Psalmist interprets providential judgments to be for this purpose: "That men may know that thou, whose name alone is Jehovah, art the Most High over all the earth" (Psalm lxxxiii. 18). Isaiah introduces the Deity asserting, "I am Jehovah, that is my name, and my glory will I not give to another" (Isaiah xlii. 8). Zechariah, in the text, predicts the universal prevalence of this doctrine, and declares that The Lord, whose name is One, shall be king in all the earth.

Take Judaism in its origin, text, or commentary; the patriarch with whom it commenced; the code in which it was embodied; the prophets by whom it was administered; and it is clear that the doctrine of a plurality of divine persons was no part of it, was excluded from it, was inconsistent with it, and could only be established on its destruction.

The results of this system appear in the Jews, who conceive the reception of the doctrine of the Trinity to be equivalent to denying the doctrines of Moses. It is remarkable that the other descendants of Abraham, through Ishmael, are also adherents to this truth.

In vain is it argued that the unity designed was only one of nature or essence, and not of person, and that it was opposed to idolatrous Polytheism. The Jews were not metaphysicians; they made not, nor could comprehend, so subtle a distinction, nor do the terms admit of it. Their being then opposed to one error does not make them now less decisive against another error. Such strong assertions of proper unity, with the employment of singular pronouns in declarations made in the name of God, and worship addressed to him, would effectually, in the judgment of the objectors, stamp any book but the Bible with the name of Unitarian.

Whatever be the doctrine of Christianity, the proper Unity of God is essential to Judaism. It is interwoven in the various parts of that wondrous fabric; it is the very life and spirit of that body. This is enough to decide the question. That which is once true of God, in himself, must be always true. He is immutable. He must always have been with or without the supposed coequal partners of his throne. It is not a subject on which increased information can be pleaded. We might have seen but one sun, though three existed. There might be three human persons, of whom one was first made known to us, and the two others subsequently; these are not parallel cases. The supposition is not admissible that the Unity of God was first revealed, and the Trinity afterwards; for the revelation of that Unity is exclusive. Not only was one Divine Being revealed, but it was revealed that there was *but* one. To reveal the Deity of the Father might perhaps be thought not to exclude the Godhead of the Son and Holy Spirit; but it was revealed that the Father was God alone, the only and exclusive God. Hence such further communication would be, not addition, but contradiction; what was made known before would not be increased, but falsified. Here, then, might we rest our faith; but this is not the whole of the evidence. Christianity pleads as strongly as Judaism; and we might say of this truth, as the writer to the Hebrews said of the word and oath of God, "That by two immutable things, wherein it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong" confirmation.

Christianity adopts this tenet of Judaism—1. Impliedly, by the absence of controversy between Christ, the apostles, or any of the first Christians, and the Jews, on the object of worship. Such controversy must have arisen had they taught the doctrine of the Trinity. There is no vestige of it; and this silence pleads eloquently, forcibly, resistlessly, on behalf of their common faith in the Divine Unity.

2. By assertions of the identity of the object of worship: not only by worshiping together, which our opponents feel very well, and show very clearly, would not have

been the case had the one been Trinitarian and the other Unitarian, but also by explicit declaration. The prayers of the apostles were addressed to "the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob." Paul admitted a difference in the manner, but not in the object of worship. "After the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers" (Acts xxiv. 14). Jesus himself bore witness to the correctness of the Jews as to this point, in his conversation with the woman of Samaria: "Ye worship ye know not what; but we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews" (John iv. 22).

3. By similar assertions of the Divine Unity. "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well" (James ii. 19). "God is one" (Gal. iii. 20).

4. By similar appropriation of worship. "When ye pray, say, Our Father" (Luke xi. 2). "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. vii. 25). "I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Ephes. iii. 14). "The blessed and *only* Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, to whom be honour and power everlasting" (1 Tim. vi. 15, 16).

5. The silence of the apostles in their addresses to Jews proves that they and their hearers agreed as to the object of worship, and only differed as to whether the one God, whom they equally acknowledged, had sent Jesus of Nazareth to be the Saviour of men: so, when they addressed Pagans, we find them not asserting a Trinity, and an incarnate God, which to Polytheists might have been more acceptable than the Jewish doctrine, but following the custom of the prophets, when reclaiming the apostate Israelites, and showing the vanity of idols, and the proofs from nature of the existence and attributes of One Great Creator. We have a striking instance of this in the speech of Paul to the Athenians.

Christianity takes from Judaism not merely the truth of this doctrine, but its importance also; and, as we have already seen, associates it with whatever is most interesting in religion or morality. With Christ, as with Moses, it is "the first of all the commandments:" with Christ, as with Moses, it is the foundation of devotion to God and benevolence to man. With the advance of the divine communications its rank is not degraded. No brighter or nobler truth appears to obscure its lustre. We see it alike preëminent in the full discoveries of Christianity and in the partial revelations of Judaism; in the one, the sun that rules the day, and in the other, the moon that rules the night.

A powerful argument against Trinitarianism is derived from what is preserved of apostolic preaching: but fully to state and enforce this would require the quotation of all the sermons recorded in the Acts. To all, Dr. Toulmin's excellent remarks on the first discourse of Peter are applicable: "Here is nothing but the plain Unitarian doctrine. Not a word came from the lips of Peter concerning the depravity of human nature, the deity and atonement of Christ, and justification by the imputation of his righteousness. Not a word like that of the Moravians, who preached to the Greenlanders concerning 'the Creator taking upon him human nature, and dying for our sins.' Peter doth not in this manner preach Christ, and yet his preaching was effectual to the conversion of multitudes. He insists upon a few plain facts only, illustrative of the unity and supremacy of God the Father, the humanity and divine mission of Jesus of Nazareth; such facts as form the creed of the Unitarian. The prominent features of this discourse are the fundamental articles of the Unitarian Creed."

Certain general characteristics of Christianity are given in scripture to which Unitarianism and Trinitarianism may be brought as tests. 1. It was, as a system of grace and mercy, superior to Judaism. "The law came by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." With this, Unitarianism evidently corresponds, which makes one the perfection of the other. If Trinitarianism be the gospel, it was inferior to Judaism; for Trinitarianism teaches that God is partial: Judaism, that "his tender mercies are over all his works;" Trinitarianism, that guilt is imputed even so as to subject justly the posterity of Adam, to the millionth generation, to damnation for his offence: Judaism, that "the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father;" Trinitarianism, that for every sin full satisfaction must be made to Divine justice: Judaism, that, "like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him; for he knoweth our frame, and remembereth that we are dust;" Trinitarianism, that his vengeance is eternal: Judaism, that judgment is "his strange work;" and that "his mercy endureth for ever." Can we say with propriety of any, passing from one of these religions to the other, "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father"? 2. Christianity was eminently simple, intelligible, and reasonable. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not that which is right? I speak as unto wise men; judge ye what I say." Here let our opponents decide. They have decided. Are they not continually accusing us of levelling every thing to our own comprehension; of spoiling Christianity of its mysteries; of not prostrating the understanding; of demanding explanation where it cannot be given; of being only rational believers? Could such appeals as those quoted have been ever made by Christ and the apostles, had they taught the paradoxes of modern orthodoxy? 3. Christianity was gospel, or glad tidings. This was description, before it became a proper name. Does the Trinitarian or Calvinistic preacher obey the command of Christ to "preach glad tidings to every creature"? Will it make men glad to tell them they are born in sin, so as to be wholly depraved; condemned for Adam's guilt; damned without repentance, and incapable of repenting without supernatural interference; many, if not most of them, abandoned without remedy to endless misery? The Saviour was incapable of this barbarous and insulting irony. It is as unlikely that such a system should be the gospel as that he should sport with the miseries of man.

Not only is the gospel characterised, but the leading features of its great corruption are delineated. We have shown how closely these apply to modern orthodoxy. Mystery, alliance with the State, spiritual domination, multiplying the objects of worship,—all agree with the terms in which a Unitarian would speak of that system. But to the Trinitarian, Unitarianism is the grossest apostasy from the gospel which has yet taken place. To his mind it is more appalling than Popery itself. And this would have required a description exactly opposite: that which delineates the gospel would be transferred to the corruption, and the prophetic picture of the corruption would become the correct likeness of the truth.

If proofs like these be insufficient; if this weight of authority and variety of evidence is to be balanced by a few figurative passages, or even by a few texts of difficult explication, where are we to find conviction? or where is the doctrine that can be shown to be scriptural? What mode of proof can be employed, which does not support Unitarianism? It has legitimate inference, direct implication, positive assertion. What source of evidence can be discovered from which it is not amply supplied? It is traced in nature, runs through the Old Testament, blazes forth in the New, and is confirmed by the early history of the Christian Church. What is the authority that it wants? It was believed by Abraham, established by Moses, enforced by the prophets, adopted by Christ, preached by the apostles, and sanctioned repeatedly by the voice of God himself. It agrees with the original descriptions of the gospel, and is irreconcilable with the prophetic delineation of its corruptions. If this fail to command credence, I will not say, "neither would they believe though one rose from the dead," for mightier miracles than that have been wrought for its proof; and it has been proclaimed by a more awful voice—the voice, not of reanimated dust, but of the ever-living God of heaven!

That this great truth was perverted and obscured is, if we consider all the circumstances, productive of fresh corroborations of its identity with genuine Christianity. According to the prediction of Paul, the revelation of the man of sin, the full development and maturity of the antichristian apostasy, was to take place in connection with some change in the Roman Empire. Such, at least, was the interpretation assigned by the general voice of antiquity, nor has a more consistent one been given by moderns, to the expression, "He that now letteth, will let, until he be taken out of the way." Under Constantine, who embraced nominal Christianity, and removed the seat of government to the East, orthodoxy attained its portentous growth. Unless this was the fulfilment of the prophecy, it never has been, and now never can be, accomplished.

Certain indications of danger and apostasy were noticed by the apostles in the primitive church. They were such as might lead from Unitarianism towards Trinitarianism; but could not possibly conduct in the opposite direction. They were, in fact, the causes whose results we see in ecclesiastical history. The principal of these deserve mention. 1. Temporising with that mythology in the belief of which the Gentile converts had been educated. "Flee from idolatry; the cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? Ye cannot drink of the cup of the Lord, and the cup of demons" (the deities of Heathenism); "ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of demons." To partake of the sacrificial feasts of the popular gods; to confound with these feasts, as to its nature and design, the eucharistic commemoration of Jesus; to transform his supper into a sacrifice, and him into a god; and to elevate him from a god in the Pagan, to God in the Christian sense of the term;—these are gradations of a progress in error, which is very conceivable and probable in itself, and which, by combining scripture with history, may be discerned with tolerable distinctness. The Gentiles would with difficulty divest themselves of the notion of subordinate deities. They had been accustomed to gods of various powers and provinces, who were corporeal and of human shape, and whom they honoured by feasts on sacrificed animals in their temples. How natural to identify with such ceremonies the Lord's Supper, and to place in such a rank the Founder of their new religion! He who healed the lame and blind, chained the winds and waves, raised the dead, and himself ascended to heaven, would, in their native phraseology, be of course a god. When Paul and Barnabas wrought a miracle at Lystra, the people said, "The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men." They would have formed a similar opinion of Christ, had they seen or heard of him; and where apostolic authority did not reach, or as soon as the first race of believers was dead, it would be difficult to oppose the notion. This tendency must have operated through the whole body of Gentile converts; and to them the belief in the divinity of Christ was for some time peculiar.

2. False shame, at obeying a Teacher who lived in mean circumstances, and died the death of a slave and a malefactor. Feelings of contempt and abhorrence were associated with the cross, and it became a fertile subject of reproach and ridicule. Paul rose superior to these taunts.

He resolved "to know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified," and not to "glory, save in the cross;" but the energy and frequency with which these feelings are displayed prove that he foresaw the danger of some apostasy, in faith or practice, from the misplaced shame of many. And accordingly, one of the first uses of the divinity of Christ was, to get rid of the debasing circumstances of his sufferings; to prove that he did not really die, but that a phantom was crucified in his stead; and thus to throw a mystic veil over the obnoxious part of Christianity.

3. The love of mystery and of apparent greatness. The beautiful simplicity of the gospel was not likely to charm either the philosophers or the vulgar. The one class would desire something more intricate; and the other, something more marvellous. "The Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom." The doctrines of the Trinity, Incarnation, &c., even in their first imperfect forms, had so much of the intricate and the marvellous, as strongly to recommend them to those whose appetites were craving for such food. They are well adapted to minister to the gratification both of those who are and of those who are not addicted to abstruse speculation. The former they provide with a thousand metaphysical questions for the exercise of their subtile wits; and by the appeals, for which they furnish materials, to the passions of the latter, they nourish that enthusiasm which is too often substituted for "pure and undefiled religion."

4. A corrupt philosophy. "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." The speculations of the Gnostics were very soon mingled with divine truth. At a subsequent period, the rapid advance of Trinitarian opinions was much owing to the accession of the Platonic philosophers, who had some obscure reveries about the nature of the Deity, to which they were determined to find something correspondent in Christianity; or which its advocates found there, in order to conciliate them.

For whatever opinions, bearing a resemblance to modern orthodoxy, are to be found in the early periods of ecclesiastical history, we can therefore readily account, from the operation of causes whose existence rests, not upon inference or conjecture, but upon apostolic testimony. Scripture certifies their reality, and pronounces their condemnation. They furnish the only satisfactory clue to the state of the Church during the first three centuries; which, to a Trinitarian, must be wholly unaccountable. They coincide with and explain facts, which in their turn justify the apprehensions of the sacred writers ; apprehensions exceedingly misplaced, if Unitarianism was a corruption and a heresy.

It is admitted by Mosheim and similar writers, that there were, in the first century, those who denied the miraculous birth of Christ, and held that he became superior to other men at his baptism, when the powers necessary for the purposes of his mission were bestowed; and that they were not a distinct body till the second century. This fact is important. If not a distinct body from other Christians, they must have been the great body of Christians; for if the divinity of Christ was the original doctrine, and the worship of Christ the original practice, those who denied the one and withheld the other could not have remained in fellowship with others. They must have been promptly expelled, as they invariably have been since Trinitarianism gained the ascendency. That they continued so long in the Church, is alone a demonstration of their superiority in point of numbers, of the antiquity of their faith, and of the novelty of the tenets to which it was opposed. Justin Martyr, in the second century, advances his notion of the superhumanity of Christ, with the tone and manner of an innovator. Tertullian describes the greater part of believers in his time as dreading the doctrine of the Trinity, and adhering strictly to the sole monarchy of God. Origen speaks of the multitude of Christians as not knowing the mystery of the Logos. Priestley observes, "So popular was Unitarianism in this age (the third century) that, according to Epiphanius, when the Unitarians met with any of the plainer Christians, they would say, 'Well, friend, what doctrine shall we hold? shall we acknowledge one God, or three?'" The fierce disputes of the fourth century, when Athanasius and Arius divided the Christian world, were caused, not by the introduction of Arianism as a novelty, but by a strong public expression of Trinitarian sentiments, which even yet had not arrived at that systematic perfection which they finally attained. Can there be a doubt, then, who were the innovators, or which way the stream was flowing? Every thing indicates a progression, of which the starting-point was simple Unitarianism, and the final reach, the Athanasian Trinitarianism of the creed. As we travel up the pages of history, we must successively deposit with different ages their inventions, till the Trinitarian system vanishes altogether. We cannot find the complete system even in the writings of Athanasius, nor his in Tertullian and Origen, nor theirs in Justin Martyr. Error retires as it advanced. If we are not yet surrounded with the blaze of day, still the darkness is breaking, the shadows of night are flitting away, and the horizon begins to be illumined. We trace in the past the dim twilight that preceded the long night of ignorance and error, when the fair forms of truth and simplicity were lost, and all was gloomy incertitude or shapeless horror; and if, in our age, the state of religious knowledge again resembles the twilight, we rejoice that the night is past, and that it harbingers not now the blackness of darkness, but the dawn of day, the rising of the sun, the dispersion of every baleful mist, the gladdening song of animated nature, the revived beauties of earth, and the unveiled glories of the serene and majestic heavens.

We commonly speak of Unitarianism as a subdivision of Christianity, and call ourselves Unitarian Christians. We might also speak of Christianity as a species of Unitarianism, and call ourselves Christian Unitarians. The contest has been tried on other principles than those of the gospel; and it may not be amiss just to notice five different classes of Unitarians, who are out of the pale of Christianity.

I. The wisest and best philosophers of Greece and Rome rose above the superstition of their age and country, and held sublime ideas of the Deity. Thus God was defined as "the living, eternal, best Being." He was spoken of as "the Father of gods and men, King of the gods, most high, most great, most excellent." "There are many popular gods," said Antisthenes, "but one natural one." Others affirm "that God, being really one, hath many names, according to the several affections he discovers, and the operations he exerts." The doctrine of Socrates was—"God is the universal intellect. God is one; perfect in himself, giving the being and the well-being of every creature." These men were lights shining in dark places. Bigotry may sometimes have passed on them a hasty and contemptuous censure, but charity, say rather justice, should make us regard them with esteem, and adopt towards them the sentiments of that liberal and excellent man (of whom I have had more than one occasion to express my admiration), William Penn, in his *Fruits of a Father's Love*: "That blessed principle, the eternal word, I begun with to you, and which is that light, spirit, grace, and truth, I have exhorted you to, in all its holy appearances and manifestations in yourselves, by which all things were at first made, and men enlightened to salvation, is Pythagoras's great light and salt of ages; Anaxagoras's divine mind; Socrates's good spirit; Timæus's unbegotten principle and author of all light: Hieron's God in man; Plato's eternal, ineffable, and perfect principle of truth; Zeno's maker and father of all; and Plotin's root of the soul. These were some of those virtuous Gentiles, commended by the apostle, Rom. ii. 13-15, that though they had not the law given to them, as the Jews had, with those instrumental helps and advantages, yet, doing by nature the things contained in the law, they became a law unto themselves."

II. The Jews have been steady Unitarians in all their calamities. Numbers of them became Christians before the doctrine of the Trinity was broached; but since that, conversion has been at an end. Till this barrier be thrown down, and Christianity purified, they remain witnesses against its professed advocates, but real corrupters.

III. The disciples of Mahomet. Although his pretensions to inspiration, his employment of the sword for conversion, and the earthly nature of his paradise, deserve strong reprobation, yet, when we consider the state of gross superstition into which the Christians of the East were sunk, and the native idolatry of the Arabians, it must be allowed that he accomplished a great reformation; he introduced comparative purity of faith and worship; and probably, after all, in estimating his character, which was compounded of enthusiasm and imposture, there was more of the former than has been commonly assigned. His doctrine, in his own words, is: "Say, God is one God; the eternal God: he begetteth not, neither is he begotten; and there is not any one like unto him." Gibbon observes: "The Koran is a glorious testimony to the Unity of God. The prophet of Mecca rejected the worship of idols and men, of stars and planets, on the rational principle that whatever rises must set; that whatever is born must die; that whatever is corruptible must decay and perish. In the Author of the universe, his rational enthusiasm confessed and adored an infinite and eternal Being, without form or place, without issue or similitude, present to our most secret thoughts, existing by the necessity of his own nature, and deriving from himself all moral and intellectual perfection." Such notions of God, from whatever source derived, must have been a blessing to those who received them in exchange for absurdity, idolatry, and degradation.

IV. While too many unbelievers of modern times stand convicted of the grossest disingenuousness in their mode of reasoning, and of great depravity of character, there are others who seem to have been honest, though mistaking, inquirers, who confounded Christianity with its abuses, which, in a Catholic country, is not surprising, and opposed them both, when they should have discriminated. Many of them have been highly useful in bringing back Christians to a purer faith, and to juster notions of the rights of conscience. The resurrection of Christ is the rock of our immortal hopes; but the conviction cannot and ought not to be suppressed, that some creeds, called Christian, are not to be compared with the religion of nature, as stated by Lord Herbert in these five articles:

1. That there is one supreme God, God of gods, or God and Father of all things.

2. That all worship and adoration ought to terminate in this one God.

3. That the love and pursuit of truth and virtue is the chief and only essential part of this acceptable, rewardable worship of the one true God.

4. That deep contrition and sorrow for our sins and aberrations from truth and virtue, with a sincere repentance and reformation after such sins committed, is the true propitiation for sin, or means of reconciling sinners to God. And—

5 That God, as the wise and righteous Judge and

Governor of the world, will certainly reward virtue and punish vice, both here and hereafter.

V. It is probable that many philosophers of China and India have taught a pure theism, and deserve a place among the honourable opponents of idolatry and vice. We know that there is, at the present moment, an intelligent and growing sect of unchristian Unitarians in Bengal, at the head of which is Rammohun Roy, a Brahmin of high character and great celebrity. Many of you, probably, have read the interesting account of his doctrine in Mr. Belsham's preface to the letter of W. Roberts, concerning the native Unitarian Christian Church at Madras. He asserts the Unity of the Supreme Being. "God is indeed One, and there is no second. There is none but the Supreme Being possessed of universal knowledge. God is the sole object of worship. Adore God alone; know God alone. To God we should approach; of him we should hear; of him we should think; and to him we should attempt to approximate." Who of us will not say, with the editor of the tract referred to, that this extraordinary man is "not far from the kingdom of God"? Who would not rejoice in the triumph of his purer faith over the delusions of his countrymen?*

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* Orthodoxy, as well as heresy, has its foreign alliances; witness Bishop Horsley's pedigree of unchristian Trinitarianism, in a charge to his clergy: "The inquiry becomes more important when it is discovered that these were notions by no means peculiar to the Platonic school; that the Platonists pretended to be no more than the expositors of a more ancient doctrine, which is traced from Plato to Parmenides; from Parmenides to his masters of the Pythagorean sect; from the Pythagoreans to Orpheus, the earliest of the Grecian mystagogues; from Orpheus to the secret lore of the Egyptian priests, in which the foundations of the Orphic theology were laid. Similar notions of a triple principle prevailed in the Persian and Chaldean theology; and vestiges even of a Trinity were discernible in the Roman superstition in a very late age. This worship the Romans had received from their Trojan ancestors; for the Trojans brought it with them into Italy from Phrygia. In Phrygia it was introduced by Dardanus, so early as in the ninth century after Noah's flood. Dardanus carried it with him from Samothrace; where the personages that were the objects of it were worshiped under the Hebrew name of the Cabirim. Who these Cabirim might be, has been a matter of unsuccessful inquiry to many learned men. The utmost that is known with certainty is, that they were originally three, and were called, by way of eminence, the great or mighty ones; for that is the import of the Hebrew name. And of the like import is

Do not these facts prove, either that the proper unity of God is the plain dictate of right reason, preached by the

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their Latin appellation, Penates. Thus, the joint worship of Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva, the triad of the Roman capitol, is traced to that of the three mighty ones in Samothrace; which was established in that island, at what precise time it is impossible to determine, but earlier, if Eusebius may be credited, than the days of Abraham."

In a critique on these Lectures in the *Eclectic Review*, the following remark is made on the passage (pp. 211-214) to which the above note refers: "If Unitarians are pleased to think of themselves as forming a sect of Deists, and to call themselves 'Christian Unitarians,' we may venture to say that their opponents will be as well content with the arrangement. Thus classed and separated, then, let us stand: on the one side, the sages of Greece and Rome, 'who by wisdom knew not God,' and the Jews, 'who do always resist the Holy Ghost,' and the followers of 'the false Prophet,' and Deists, and Chinese, and Hindoos, and Christian Unitarians; and, on the other side, all those who call on the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." That Deist means properly a believer in God, and only accidentally a disbeliever in Christianity, and that it is solely in the former sense that Unitarians (and Trinitarians also) are a sect of Deists; that the Gentiles referred to were those who did "by nature the things contained in the law," thus uniting the approbation of the New Testament and the reprobation of the *Eclectic Review;* that it is not, nor ever has been, by maintaining the unity of God that the Jews "resist the Holy Ghost;" and that when that doctrine was asserted by "the false Prophet," it could no more cease to be an important truth, than Jesus would become an impostor in consequence of a demoniac's proclaiming him the Messiah,—these are facts so obvious, that it would be unnecessary to point out the foregoing evasion of them, but to illustrate the mode in which an Evangelical Reviewer criticises a Unitarian publication. When he characterises his own party as "those who call on the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," his description is both correct and unscriptural: it marks their worship as neither known nor practised by Christ and his apostles. Had he read the note to which these remarks are appended, he would have seen that I was warranted by one of his brethren in not considering Trinitarians, any more than Unitarians, as standing alone, or having no associates out of the Christian pale. Horsley, and others (See *Yates's Sermon on the Peculiarities of the Gospel*), have fraternised, not indeed with those whose comparatively pure and sublime speculations seem a glimmering of the light of heaven, but with the adorers of Brahma, Veeshnu, and Seeva; of Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva; and with those who "held the existence of *three* Parcæ or Fates, of the *three-shaped* monster Chimæra, and of the dog Cerberus, which had *three* heads upon *one* body." The list of affinities thus completed, I no more quarrel with it than the reviewer. Let him and his party

"Claim kindred there, and have their claims allowed."

heavens and the earth, where man will hear their voice; or that it is a fragment of some original revelation, passed down by tradition to all ages and countries, and selected by the wise and good from the mass of accompanying absurdity? Either supposition implies its truth and importance. It is gratifying to see it generally in connection with superior knowledge and virtue; to see it either a resource in general ignorance and depravity, or a means for bettering the state of mankind; either clung to as the last plank in the shipwreck of truth and freedom, or held aloft, the standard of reviving goodness, and signal of reformation.

Something like antiquity and universality are occasionally claimed by Trinitarians, while they affect to speak of Unitarianism as the reverie of a few moderns. Even confining our views to Christian history, we have sufficiently shown the fallacy of this representation, which is founded solely upon its comparatively later revival. Unitarianism "appears modern only when referred to an age of spiritual domination and persecution. Catholics wish to refer Protestantism to a recent and impure origin in the reign of Henry VIII. Trinitarians confine their views of Unitarianism to this side of that deluge of barbarism and superstition which overwhelmed the moral world at the destruction of the Roman Empire, and extended to the era of the Reformation; and from which some sects arose sooner than others. The tops of rugged rocks and barren mountains first appeared; but the extensive plains and fertile valleys, destined for the abode of man, rose last to view. The gloomy raven was the first to quit the ark, and was not long in finding a resting-place; but the peaceful dove hovered over the scene of desolation, returned and lingered, till it brought the olive-branch to give the assurance of safety to mankind. The sun itself could not, at first, penetrate the misty atmosphere, purify the air, and restore the unclouded face of the heavens" (PERRY's *Letters to Kinghorn*).

The chief scene of reviving Unitarianism at the time of the Reformation was in Poland. There was a constellation of illustrious characters, which shed around a blaze of religious light. Their writings yet remain, the rich repository of what is most valuable in Biblical knowledge and criticism. Of these the most conspicuous was Socinus. We lament the inconsistency which led him some steps in the road of persecution; but we must do justice to his high worth. "He died," says Robinson, "in perfect peace, reflecting on his sufferings with pleasure, and expressing his hopes that his labours would be rewarded by the just Judge at the last day." The epitaph inscribed on his tomb shows what his friends thought of his doctrine. It alludes to Popery under the similitude of a building: "Luther took off the roof of Babylon; Calvin threw down the walls; but Socinus dug up the foundations." A furious persecution afterwards broke up the Unitarian Churches in Poland; but large bodies remain to this day in Transylvania. Indeed, at first they were hunted to death alike by Catholics and Protestants; witness the barbarous murder of Servetus, by the instigation of Calvin. Similar scenes took place in this country. That amiable young prince, Edward VI., was with great difficulty prevailed on by Cranmer to sign the death-warrant of Joan Bocher, a pious, intelligent, and distinguished female, for denying the Trinity. He did it with tears in his eyes, and with the solemn appeal: "My lord archbishop, as in this case I resign myself to your judgment, you must be answerable to God for it." The history of Unitarian martyrs would be an interesting subject. Many have suffered in this country, under laws which no longer exist, but some of which have only recently been torn from the statute-book which they disgraced. Heavily pressed the yoke of persecution on the necks of our forefathers, and its burden crushed them to the earth. They fell beneath its overwhelming weight; and it formed their only monument. Never yet have they received that well-deserved tribute of posthumous applause, which has been the portion of so many others, whose names a recording finger has indelibly traced on the pillar of immortality. They have passed away without their fame, for our adversaries have told our tale, and by idolatrous Christians has been written the history of Christianity. But their names and worth are preserved in those imperishable records treasured up in the courts of heaven, were traced by the hand of Omniscience, and shall one day be unfolded to an admiring world: then shall they "shine as the stars for ever and ever."*

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* An exception should have been made of the brief but interesting

The revived progress of Unitarianism claims affinity with the original diffusion of the gospel, as it has advanced in opposition to power, and in defiance of persecution: and of late years, since it has been fairly and plainly preached, it has spread with great rapidity amongst the poor. So far as its present state and prospects belong to the general design of this Course, they will be considered in the next Lecture. The text is a prediction of its final, universal prevalence, which must be realised. Its progress is first to destroy error and quell dissension in the Church; and then to flow around the globe, bearing to every land the unity and love of God, and universal brotherhood of man. Then "shall the Lord be King over all the earth; in that day shall there be One Lord, and his name One;" and every voice shall echo the song, till it resound from shore to

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account of some of the principal sufferers for the Unitarian cause, in Mr. Belsham's *Sermon on the Repeal of the Penal Laws against Anti-Trinitarians.* "The history of virtuous, upright minds," says Mr. Lindsey, in his *Historical View of the Unitarian Doctrine*, "and inquirers after truth, emerging out of the long night of antichristian darkness, seeking the great Source of being and benevolent Father of all; and having found HIM, yielding themselves to torture and death, rather than disown HIM,—presents the most instructing, awful, and animating spectacle and lesson, of all others." Mr. L.'s work but very partially accomplished this object. We stand in great need of a history of Unitarianism. Such a work might be thrown into a series of biographical portraits, connecting the most important events of each age or country with some leading character; commencing with those who, in the second, third, and fourth centuries, withstood the tide of corruption then flowing in upon the Church; including the Polish and other continental reformers, and the advocates for truth and liberty in the Establishment of our own country; detailing, where authentic information exists, the different processes by which the faith of eminent individuals was changed or formed; exhibiting at large the progress of Unitarianism among the poor, especially in the conversion of whole societies, as in Rossendale, &c.; and concluding with a complete view of its present state, as to numbers, institutions, legal situation, public opinion, &c. This plan would not only embrace much to command the attention of the theological inquirer, but would satisfactorily repel many objections to Unitarianism; and by furnishing the youthful part of our societies with information and examples of the most attractive description, would excite attachment to the religion of their fathers, veneration for its confessors and advocates, interest in its cause, and knowledge, from facts, of the best means for promoting its diffusion. We have men well qualified for such a task; I commend it to their attention.

shore, of "Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace, good-will towards men."

But between us and that happy period there is yet a long interval of arduous conflict. By strict consistency to rebut the shafts of calumny; by mild benevolence to conciliate affection, without swerving from the integrity that disdains the slightest sacrifice of truth; with unwearied patience to encounter opposition, ignorance, and prejudice; and by firm, united, zealous exertion to restore the purity of Christian truth on the ruins of antichristian error,—these are the high duties of its advocates; these are the toilsome but honourable task to which they are called by God and Providence. Uniting in this noble work, you become the coadjutors of the excellent of the earth, who in any age have interposed, at their own peril, to arrest human evils or multiply blessings; who, like Aaron, have stood between the dead and the living to stay the plague; who, as Abraham, have renounced all for God. You join the illustrious band of Reformers, kindred spirits in all climes and generations, from him, the best and greatest, who, "for the joy set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame," down to your own Priestleys and Lindseys, who heard his animating voice, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life;" and who calls you, with them, on those plains of holy warfare, to sustain the cause of truth, righteousness, and benevolence, and reap the deathless laurels of celestial glory.

Lecture V.—On Creeds, Controversy, and the Influence of Religious Systems on Society.

"Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased" (Daniel xii. 4).

In the preceding Lectures we have attempted to exhibit that great apostasy in the Church, designated by the term Antichrist, in its nature and extent, as consisting in unscriptural faith and worship, superstitious practices and spiritual tyranny, and affecting, in various degrees, not only the Church of Rome and the Eastern Church, but also the different Protestant sects and in this country both the

Establishment and Dissenters. To this has been opposed what I consider the unadulterated gospel, sacred and eternal truth, approved by reason and declared in scripture, a system fostered by inquiry, almost identified with religious liberty, and eminently favourable to piety, benevolence, and happiness. I have now to show the advance which this system has made, and the means by which that progress has been effected, and will be continued till Unitarianism become again coextensive with Christianity; which occupies the present Lecture, and prepares us for contemplating afterwards the strength of regenerated Christianity to restrain and ultimately abolish that greatest of evils, war; and thus conduct mankind towards perfection. For this purpose, the terms of the subject of this Lecture were selected. *The influence of religious systems on society* is that which makes their discussion of importance; *creeds,* and their accompaniments, are commonly the intrenchments which error throws up for her defence; and *controversy* is the chief agency by which those barriers are demolished, truth is elicited and diffused, and consequently the church purified and the world improved. These topics will be kept in view, and involved in most of the remarks I shall make this evening, though without aiming, for reasons before assigned, at giving them either a distinct or a complete discussion.

He must be a very careless reader of either ancient or modern history who does not at once see that religion has, in all times and countries, operated with great force on the condition of man. Not only does it affect the moral character, by supposing or creating a standard of duty, and exciting fears of punishment or hopes of recompense in futurity; but it is also one of the first among the causes by which nations have risen to refinement, knowledge, and power, or been retained in or plunged into ignorance and barbarism. It has steeled them for the atrocities of war, or disposed them for the milder arts and joys of peace; it has coiled around them the serpent folds of the chain of vassalage, or beamed the heavenly light of liberty; and has been, according to the spirit of its institutions, the glory or the ruin of mightiest empires.

There are four classes of men, aiming at some sort of sway over others, who have always, by their conduct, given evidence of their vivid perception of the vast influence of religion on society, and who have eagerly grasped it as a machine to effect their purposes.

1. *Legislators* have invoked its aid to sanction their institutions when in infancy, to second them in operation, and to make up by public veneration for their weakness when declining by antiquity. The learned and acute, though often paradoxical, author of the *Divine Legation of Moses* has done much towards proving that Moses was the only lawgiver of all antiquity who did not enforce his edicts by connecting with them some explicit reference to a future state of rewards and punishments. Generally they pretended to a divine revelation. The original laws of Egyptians, Athenians, Spartans, Romans, Chinese, Peruvians, Goths, Arabians, and many other nations, were all, according to their authors, inspired by some guardian god or gods. They pretended acquaintance with the gods: the fact was, they knew human nature.

2. *The poet* aims at power, as well as the lawgiver, though of a different kind. He would control the hearts of men, reign in their imaginations, command their tears, win their smiles, and enjoy a transient immortality in their memory and praises. The earliest poetry was that of devotion. Harps were first strung in honour of gods; and even the drama itself, in Greece, was but a gorgeous sacrifice. Its revival was similar to its origin, and is traced to the mysteries which monks performed on Church festivals, in which they united the effect of decoration and exhibition with that of poetry, describing the creation of the world, or the crucifixion and resurrection of the Redeemer. The great majority of poets have employed religion in attempting to reach that empire over the feelings of which they are so ambitious.

3. *Orators* have usually had recourse to similar means for a similar purpose. The great pleaders of antiquity, whose names are identified with this art, frequently used religion to play on the passions of their auditors. We commonly find it introduced in those speeches which are recorded to have had the greatest effect. The most sceptical have employed it for impression in their eloquence. In later days we have had splendid declamations, and successful ones too, about "the throne and the altar" from some

who cared about the throne but for the sake of its trappings, and worshiped at no altars but those raised to their own interest or vanity.

4. *Impostors* of various classes, pretended prophets, priests, pontiffs, conquerors, have done homage to the power of religion over society, by appealing to it in the breasts of the multitudes whom they have cajoled, or plundered, or trampled under foot. Infidelity has sometimes lurked in lawn, and chuckled at its gains beneath the triple crown. In many instances besides that of Mahomet, has fanaticism sharpened the sword of conquest. So much art is not wasted in counterfeiting trifles. Such men would not have cared for the name of religion, had it not been a passport to power, wealth, or fame.

The effects of religion, true or false, are chiefly produced by two means. It influences the mind by the belief of its creed, and the habits by its institutions and observances. Both are usually employed, although in very different proportions. The religions of ancient Egypt, of Hindostan, of Greece, and in a less degree Mahometanism, had more of ceremony than of faith: Christianity has more of faith than of ceremony, which indeed it employs but little, if at all. In Judaism they are combined, but ceremony seems to preponderate. Popery is a religion of ceremony compared with Protestantism. In general, we may observe that religions of ceremony prevail with the ignorant; those of faith with the intelligent: the former combine with fixedness and slavery; the latter with change, liberty, and improvement. The philosophers, whose names raise Greece so high, had a religion of their own, of free speculation, which led them on to glorious truths and high excellence, while the mass of their countrymen seemed another race. The prayers, five times in a day, and frequent ceremonies of the Turks, have had no inconsiderable effect in keeping down their national character, and throwing them so far behind that Europe, whose proudest states they might have rivalled. Could the natives of Hindostan be, by some miracle, transformed into Christians, and the distinction of castes and all their other debasing institutions obliterated, where would be their feebleness, their subjection to foreigners, and all that now makes them a property and not a people?

The religion of ceremony tends to reduce man to a mere machine; a puppet, bowing before altars, fingering beads, walking in procession, and kneeling to images. The fire of intellect, being unfed, wastes and expires. The character becomes devoid of that consistency and elevation which can result only from understanding and believing great moral principles. Establishment, repose, and antiquity often make the ceremonial part of a system preponderate over the intellectual. The military faith of predestination was most conspicuous in Mahometanism, while associated with energy; and its ritual became elevated, as the character of its votaries sank into feebleness. The affinity of the Mosaic institutions to that class of religions which has the least favourable operation on human improvement, appears at first inconsistent with their divine origin. The fact is explained by a reference to their design, which was not to bring the Jews to an advanced state of knowledge, but to make them the keepers of the records of revelation, and the worship of the One God, till the coming of Christ. The ritual was a thorny fence around the pure religion of the patriarchs. By rendering the Jewish character nearly stationary, two great advantages were gained for mankind. Revelation was securely preserved at a period when the world was so debased that extension would have led to its total loss: and afterwards, when it was proffered to the nations, the inferiority of its guardians was a pledge of its divinity.

There is another species of religion which neither exercises the intellect upon important truth, nor governs life by prescribed ceremonies, but appeals to the imagination. It peoples caves, woods, rivers, mountains, with tutelary deities, to whom it not only gives "a local habitation and a name," but whose forms it paints, and whose voices it tunes. This is not powerful in its influence upon character, and, except in rare circumstances, speedily assimilates itself to the other classes, either rising into faith by the aid of philosophy, or degenerating into the external worship of material images. The mythology of antiquity was "a creed outworn," long before Christianity swept it from the earth. The speculating few, if they did not disregard the whole as mere fable, considered gods as personifications, and their histories as allegories; while the ignorant many adored, not the creations of the poet, with whom they had no fellowship of fancy, but of the sculptor, whose art furnished a visible and tangible deity to tenant their village temple. The researches of the wise, and the stupidity of the vulgar, alike dissolve the enchantments of poetic imagination. There is also, generally, a locality about such superstitions which forbids their permanence after much intercourse with other countries. They are equally transitory, when superinduced upon a rational faith. The living animals of Egypt and the monstrous images of India, though at first mystic emblems of real or supposed truths, soon usurped supreme worship. The invocation of saints entailed that of their images on both the Greek and Latin churches. It would not long survive their disuse.

Religions which lay their foundation, where alone a solid foundation can be laid, in the understanding, are liable to be perverted into useless speculation. Thus, while Christianity was burdened with rites borrowed from Judaism or Paganism, till with the unthinking it became a mere round of unmeaning forms, its faith was frittered away by the schoolmen into a series of metaphysical subtleties. It would be vain to expect from the endless quibbles which have been occasioned by mysterious doctrines, the beneficial results upon the heart and life which arise from just reasoning upon plain and certain principles.

Although relying principally upon the power of mind, Christianity at first employed that of habit with great success, not, like other systems, for purposes of ceremony, but in aid of morality, by the discipline of its churches, whose members watched over, reproved, instructed, and strengthened each other. And when this discipline ceased, or was misdirected, its place was partially supplied by the influence gained over public opinion.

The philosophical historian cannot tell the tale of eighteen centuries without assigning a conspicuous place to Christianity among the operating causes upon the state, comforts, and liberties of man. Without enlarging upon results which might fill volumes, let it suffice barely to mention the general abolition of domestic slavery; the elevation of the female character and condition, and the termination of polygamy; greater purity of manners; comparative mildness in the conduct of warfare; the suppression of many cruel practices, and the introduction of benevolent institutions; with the progress making towards the ultimate abolition of slavery;—these, and many other social blessings of high moment, have been the silent gift of Christianity to society, a temporal boon to confirm the promise of eternal life.

Another result of Christianity deserves more particular mention—its tendency to secure, advance, and perfect the intellectual and moral education of man. When not most grossly corrupted, it must produce reading and reflection, and extend them among the lower classes of society. Hence, especially since the Reformation, and still more rapidly since the recent age of controversy, and gradual recurrence to its genuine spirit, the number of readers, and the quantity of general information, have been prodigiously multiplied. Much of this is owing to the simple fact, that Christianity exists in a *book* avowedly for individual interpretation, and not neutralised, as in eastern superstitions, or in Popery, by traditions of equal authority, or privileged classes of authoritative interpreters. To make any order of men the depositaries and peculiar dispensers of truth is saying, Do not read—it is not necessary; do not think—it is done for you; do not inquire, doubt, compare, discuss, decide—here are persons to whom all that is delegated: let there be only authority and submission; the privileged wise and the subjugated ignorant. Christianity says the reverse of all this, and it has given a mighty impulse to the human mind. The interest and variety of the contents of the Bible seem designed by Providence for this end; they make it preëminently the people's book—the book of the city and of the village, of the mechanic, labourer, artisan, and cottager; of the aged poor and the infant poor; the cause why millions prize the ability to read, transmit it down to millions more, and harbinger the wide diffusion of knowledge and gradual perfection of intellect.

While the influence of pure Christianity is good unmixed, and of the highest order, that of its various corruptions is as decidedly evil. So far as these additions or perversions relate to Trinitarian worship and ecclesiastical domination, their effects have been already exhibited. There are some other points which must now be noticed.

The Church of England retains so much ceremony, that but for the evangelical party, and the reaction produced by the activity of different classes of Dissenters, the prevailing character of the religion of its members would be that of lifeless and ignorant formality. In practice, she rather requires submission than faith. Provided a heretic be a good churchman in other respects, and can make his own conscience easy, he may, so long as his clergyman is not evangelical, remain in her communion with but little annoyance compared with what he would be exposed to among orthodox Dissenters.

Among Methodists, and some Methodistic Calvinists, there is more of an imaginative religion than perhaps has ever existed (except where secluded situation, unincreasing information, and aptness of local scenery, have preserved superstitions), without being dissipated by inquiry, or calling in the aid of those sensible representations and daily ceremonies, which so commonly follow and supersede, and, though intended as a fortress, remain as a monument. They have a vivid perception of that humanised Deity whom the liturgic worshipers only describe in words. Liveried angels lackey them in their daily occupations, or wait at the gates of their chapels to carry to heaven intelligence of convictions and conversions. The very devil of their school-book pictures haunts their paths, whispers in their ears, and personally superintends their domestic troubles. Their hell is literally a brimstone lake; and their heaven the temple, or city, with the material glory of God, and the robes, palms, crowns, and songs of the Apocalypse. They lose the proselytes who take to thinking; and the rest would speedily disband, did a splendid Catholic Establishment offer them an asylum. Happily a better destiny is prepared for them by Bell and Lancaster.

Genuine Calvinism is of a much more intellectual cast. It is framed for power and permanence. It despises ceremony, and rules the feelings with a rod of iron. It has all the energy of Mahometanism in its most vigorous days, but without those seeds of weakness which so soon sprang up in its prosperity. The perpetual modifications of modern Calvinists have deprived the system of much of the gloomy grandeur, stern consistency, and almost omnipotent control over the mind, which belonged to it originally. Those advocates have thereby shown their own amiability, their respect for the scriptures, and the approximation of their party towards pure Christianity. They have suffered reason to step beyond her allotted province in their creed, where she is treated as a slave, and employed to do the drudgery of completing and cementing parts, but not allowed to touch the foundations of the fabric. Calvinism is great only when taken as a whole; and then formidable because, on erroneous principles, and for perverted objects, it exercises so much the powers of the understanding, and so completely pervades the mind with its tyrannous influence. It does not enfeeble or degrade, but embitters, darkens, and perverts the soul. The effects of this system on society are in strong contrast with those resulting from the milder and purer faith delineated in the last Lecture.

The character of God is exhibited in different lights. It may be said by all that he is supremely excellent, but the agreement is only verbal, for the details of this excellence display a complete contrariety. The opposite believers trace it in God as loving all his creatures, and as loving only a part; as forming all for happiness, and as foredooming numbers to misery; as making us individually responsible, and as both condemning and saving by moral substitution; as forgiving freely on repentance, and as dispensing mercy only after a satisfaction to his justice; as punishing to correct, and as condemning vindictively and for ever. Have these opposite believers the same notion of goodness? If so, it is impossible, whatever be professed, that they should alike recognise it in their God. But if each believe in the absolute perfection of his God, their notions of moral excellence must be widely different, of that excellence to which they render their highest admiration, by which they form their own characters, and the imitation of which is the first principle of their religion. So far as this dark notion of the Deity is unchecked by the native movements of the heart, the unequivocal precepts of religion, and the intermixture of better principles, it tends to form a gloomy bigot, miserable in himself and pernicious to others.

And has not the notion that conversion from sin to holiness is an immediate and miraculous work of the Holy Spirit on the mind, which no human power can attain, and, when attained, no human power destroy, an influence on society to be deprecated by the philanthropist? Does it not produce presumption in some and despair in others? It has produced them widely and dreadfully. How deplorable his state who believes in election but is unconvinced of his own election; and in miraculous conversion, which he cannot satisfy himself that he has ever felt; over whose devoted head have rolled in imagination the thunders of Almighty wrath; who feels himself already fettered in every limb, and waiting for execution; with no hand on earth to aid, no pitying voice from heaven to speak the words of mercy and of power, the conscious, helpless child of depravity and of misery, of everlasting misery! And suppose this much-desired conviction gained: his eternal salvation is now secure; he may, to use a favourite expression, "fall foully, but not finally." How immense the distance between him and the beings amongst whom he lives and moves! He is a child of God, but they are children of the devil; his mind is the illumined and purified residence of the Holy Ghost, theirs the abode of total and invincible depravity; he is clothed with the spotless robe of imputed righteousness, while their seeming virtues are but splendid sins. Alike as they may seem to human eye, there is the awful difference of spiritual life and spiritual death, the favour of God and the wrath of God, an eternity of joy and an eternity of anguish. Is human nature to be trusted on this giddy elevation? Is this a faith which "worketh by love"? or is it not in danger of becoming the source of pride, censoriousness, presumption, and selfishness?

Not only is heaven supposed to be the peculiar inheritance of the elect, and saving faith—the faith of Calvinism more or less rigorously interpreted—an indispensable mark of election, but earth is preserved only for their sakes, to be the scene of their redemption, calling, and sanctification; and when their number is completed, this goodly and glorious frame of things is to be dashed to pieces like useless machinery:

> "Thus shall this moving engine last
> Till all his saints are gathered in,
> Then for the trumpet's dreadful blast
> To shake it all to dust again!"—WATTS.

The benevolent feelings must be injured, and very much limited in their operation, by such theories. It is not surprising, however it may be deplored, that they should lead to such views of the endless misery of others as are expressed in the following extract from the writings of one of the ablest defenders of Calvinism:

"The saints in heaven will behold the torments of the damned. The smoke of their torments ascendeth up for ever and ever! They shall be tormented in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb. So shall they be tormented in the presence of the glorified saints!

"Hereby will saints be rendered more sensible how great their salvation is, when they see how great the misery is from which God has saved them, and how great the difference he has made between their state and the state of others, who were by nature, and perhaps for a time by practice, more sinful and hell-deserving than any. It will give them a greater sense of the wonderfulness of God's grace towards them. Every time they look upon the damned, it will excite in them a lively and admiring sense of the grace of God in making them to differ.

"The sight of hell torments will exalt the happiness of the saints for ever! It will not only make them more sensible of the greatness and freeness of the grace of God in their happiness, but it will really make their happiness the greater, as it will make them more sensible of their own happiness. It will give them *a more lively relish* for it; it will make them prize it the more, when they see others who were of the same nature, and born under the same circumstances, plunged into such misery, and they so distinguished! Oh! it will make them sensible how happy they are! A sense of the opposite misery, in all cases, greatly increases the relish of any joy or pleasure!"

This passage, as to the spirit which it breathes, the system from which it flowed, or the effect of that system upon the social feelings of our nature, requires no comment.

To *creeds,* with their usual accompaniments, we owe much of the duration of mischiefs and absurdities, which else would perish with their authors. There can be no objection to any Christian's expressing his own idea of the doctrines of scripture in his own language; but there is great objection to such statements being adopted by Christian Churches, and vested with any sort of importance or authority. They sprang up in the Christian Church in company with error, avarice, pride, and persecution. At best, they must be objects of jealous suspicion to the friend of religious liberty. They are usually both imperfect and erroneous. Whatever be truth, who can deem it possible that all the propositions contained in the Thirty-nine Articles should be true? How many of their subscribers believe a majority of them? As to their perfection, in a collection of sixteen creeds of Protestant Churches published at Geneva, 1612, there are only six (of which that of the Church of England is not one) that speak of the providence of God; and eleven take no notice of the resurrection of the dead. Creeds are deadly to inquiry. They say to the mind, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther." They are too often badges of temporal superiority for some, and instruments of tyranny over others. They are associated with the notions of establishment and priesthood; and in this way, as well as others, lead to persecution: while in their avowed object of producing uniformity of opinion, they have, in the Church at least, totally failed, and only prove, instead, traps to catch consciences. Amongst Dissenters, their use is but too common, and active superintendence makes them more efficacious, and, consequently, more mischievous. With this thorny fence they often guard their schools, churches, seminaries for the ministry, and pulpits, against the inroads of heresy. If successful, they may keep out with it freedom of thought and speech, independence of mind, and even sincerity.

To the evil of creeds we oppose the utility of controversy; but it ought not to be forgotten that on the utility of controversy there are some serious drawbacks. Passion is too apt to mingle in it, and bring uncharitableness or calumny in its train. The practised debater often handles sacred things with unbecoming levity; and the struggle will occasionally be less for truth than for victory. Pious feeling is exceedingly liable to suffer in theological conflicts. A disputatious spirit sweeps, with the force and fury of a whirlwind, the sacrifice from the altar of devotion, and extinguishes its holiest fires. These evils should ever be guarded against with the utmost caution. Still, we must look to controversy as the chief means of realising that reformation of Christianity, that reversion to its original principles, which must precede any great improvement in the state of the world. Its utility cannot be better demonstrated than by showing the results already produced by the Unitarian controversy on the Christian public. Those results are of great importance; and they are also connected with the general design of these Lectures, by their bearing on the present state and future prevalence of Unitarian Christianity.

The Unitarian controversy has done good, because it *is* a controversy; a Christian controversy, conducted on Christian principles, by appeals to the New Testament. Controversy rightly conducted, with the temper unruffled, the heart unprejudiced, is good for man. It is the destiny of his nature to learn, not by intuition, but by discussion. It is the dignity of reason to bow, not to authority, but to conviction. It is the dictate of Christianity to believe, not on hearsay, but on examination. But this controversy has had results connected with *the word of God* of a highly beneficial nature. It has directed the attention of critics to the *constitution of the sacred text*, and been the occasion of purifying it from additions and corruptions, made by carelessness, wantonness, or party spirit, in former times. I say nothing about such passages as the initial chapters of Matthew and Luke, which are still under discussion; but there are others which all who understand the subject *now* admit to have been no part of the original text. Some of these are very remarkable, as Acts xx. 28, where *God*, instead of *the Lord*, has been made to purchase the church *with his own blood;* 1 Tim. iii. 16, where *God* is inserted for *which* or *who*, referring to the gospel or to Christ, most probably the former; Rev. i. 11, where "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last," has been put into the mouth of Christ. Dr. Doddridge professes that this, more than any text in the Bible, prevented him from believing Jesus Christ to have been a creature. And 1 John v. 7, 8, where the well-known interpolated words approached nearer to a declaration of the Trinity in Unity than any passage of scripture. These are generally given up by well-informed Trinitarians. It is a fact, then, that additions were made to the word of God, that these additions are now discovered and exploded, and that this has been owing to the revival of Unitarianism, without which nobody would have been interested in their detection. To purify the scriptures from man's additions is to deserve well of the Christian world. If a curse is denounced against these who add to or take from holy writ, surely a blessing rests on those by whom its integrity is restored and vindicated. And observe, these corruptions were introduced during the advance and prevalence of Trinitarianism; they are all in favour of Trinitarianism; and they give way in the attacks made upon Trinitarianism: of the two systems, one mixed its chaff with the wheat, while the other, with the winnowing-fan of controversy, has purged the floor. The ark of God, as it sailed down the stream of corrupt ages, was soiled with the slime of superstition, till reviving truth washed off the stains and recovered its original purity. By *false translations* the unlearned reader was made to believe that that was, which was not, the word of God. Thus, where the apostle enjoins "to forgive one another, even as God, by Christ, hath forgiven you" (Ephes. iv. 32), the common translation has, "for Christ's sake," which every one acquainted with the original knows to be an unfaithful rendering. It was an attempt, as revelation passed from the Greek into the English, to slip in by the way the doctrine of Atonement. Many more cases might be adduced, in which the authorised version, instead of receiving the water of life as into transparent crystal, showing all its purity and brilliance, has been a foul and stained cup, tinging it with the dark colours of human creeds. Right *interpretation* is seldom obtained where any party holds unchecked the key, and makes every thing bend to system. Intelligent Trinitarians now would be ashamed of urging for that doctrine many texts which were formerly thought demonstrative. Studies of this kind were once peculiar to the learned, and the many rested on their authority. During the last twenty years, in connection with the progress of Unitarianism, they have become *popular*, and a degree of knowledge has been diffused that elevates a considerable proportion of our societies to the level of the critics of former times. Biblical criticism, the high province of the learned, was but a cloud floating aloft for men to gaze at, and often darkening the light of truth, till, at the electric touch of controversy, the mass dissolved in a descending shower, which has enriched the vale of humble life with fruits of heavenly wisdom. Men have been made more familiar with the scriptures, and have studied them to greater purpose. They *alone* have been appealed to. The word of God has been exalted,—the text of the Bible has been purified,—the translation of the Bible has been corrected,—the meaning of the Bible has been elucidated,—the study of the Bible has been promoted. This is an important step towards the renovation of Christianity.

Another encouraging symptom, resulting from the Unitarian controversy, is the gradual lowering of the standard of orthodoxy. A comparison of the language of the popular religionists of the present day with the writings of those who lived a century ago, and with intermediate authors, indicates a very considerable change, and a much greater degree of moderation, and a closer adherence to scripture. The Trinity is now commonly spoken of in guarded and ambiguous language. All that many will say on the subject is, that there are three *somewhats* in the Deity, which, for want of a better term, are called persons. How unlike the bold descriptions of Bull, Waterland, and others, of the mutual indwelling, impenetration, emperichoresis of the persons, the dictatorial peculiarity of the Athanasian Creed, or even the language of men so enlightened as Taylor, Barrow, &c.! These and other writers, both in and out of the Church, spoke of Christ also, of his miraculous conception and divine sufferings, in terms to impute which now to their successors would be deemed calumnious. Similar changes have taken place on other subjects. The doctrine of Satisfaction, instead of glaring in all the enormity of a bargain between a merciless, vindictive creditor, and an independent, generous surety, is softened by a surrounding shade of mystery, and thrown into the indefiniteness of moral causation. The horrid decree of Reprobation is now rarely blazoned in flaming characters on the appalled sight. Instead of being resistlessly hurled, the non-elect are suffered of themselves to fall into endless torment. The notion of salvation by faith alone is uniformly or frequently accompanied by assertions of the necessity of good works. Worship is approaching the scriptural standard. Frequent and exclusive prayers to the Holy Ghost begin to be symptoms of high, in distinction from moderate, orthodoxy. Such language as that of Watts, in the following verses, is disused by some congregations, and by many individuals is referred to with pain, shame, or condemnation:

> "Rich were the drops of Jesus' blood,
> That calmed his frowning face,
> That sprinkled o'er the burning throne,
> And turn'd the wrath to grace."

And,

> "To thee ten thousand thanks we bring,
> Great Advocate on high;
> And glory to th' Eternal King,
> Who lays his fury by."

Had the Church of England and the Calvinistic Dissenters now to frame their creeds, without precedent to guide them, the Thirty-nine Articles would not originate with the one, nor the Assembly's Confession with the other. The standard of orthodoxy is lower than it was; and it continues to sink: but if the party are right now, they have been wrong; if now they are strictly scriptural, they have been unscriptural; and they have to thank their opponents for driving or shaming them back into the right road. While individuals (in no small number) have completely renounced the system, the whole mass has slowly receded; the tide yet ebbs and flows at intervals; but the old mark is not reached at its height, and at its influx the old bank is left unwashed by the billows; for generations yet the fluctuations may continue, but all will finally settle at the point of truth.

Christian *liberality* is indebted to the same cause for being more clearly defined and generally cultivated. While salvation is connected with a creed, inquiry is daunted by anathemas; conscience fettered by impositions; charity restricted by unauthorised limitations; and the gates of heaven are barred by human inventions. To Unitarianism belongs the glory of opening that page of scripture which teaches that "God is no respecter of persons; but in every country he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him;" the honour of vindicating the innocency of involuntary mental error, and of embracing in fraternal love the good of all parties here, and breathing the hope of a heaven for all the virtuous hereafter. Nor has this honourable stand been altogether unsuccessful. There is a growing spirit of charity and generosity among Christians; an approach to the temper of that undying, apostolic declaration, which is the very essence, standard, soul of Christian liberality. Events have aided this, and there have been some which, one would think, few hearts could resist. Stoutly cased in bigotry must his heart be, and invulnerable to every generous emotion, who has, when a child, lisped his Maker's praises in the sweet simplicity of Watts's infant hymns, and in maturer life borrowed his harmonious language to embody the pious feelings of his soul, and present them to his God, and then read his almost dying renunciation of the Trinity, in the belief of which he had been educated; who can see the high worth and piety and goodness of a Lindsey, and follow his mind through its course of inquiry and conversion, to the heroic renunciation of his earthly prospects; who can enjoy the noble effusions of a Robinson, and see the pleader for the divinity of Christ ultimately convinced, in spite of his own arguments;—and yet from the heaven of his hopes exclude the converts of Unitarianism. There are still dark souls of this description; but with Unitarianism the light of love arose on the world, and it will shine "more and more unto the perfect day."

The tendency of Unitarianism is to *destroy sectarianism*. Its votaries are separated by so mighty a barrier from the rest of the Christian world, that they readily overlook the lesser differences among themselves; like a few persons of different nations, shipwrecked on a desert island, who, whether their native countries be at peace or war, find it necessary to unite cordially, and render each other good-will and kind offices. All the minor varieties that have made parties, fostered bigotry, and excited alienation and persecution, exist among them commonly, without interfering with social peace or individual affection. And though to a much less extent, yet something of the same result has been produced among their opponents; and the necessity of defending the great peculiarities of their system has softened the asperities that used to attend its more minute varieties. Good men have long looked forward to a time when dogmas and leaders shall cease to give names to religious societies; when they shall merge in the more honourable title of Christian; and there shall be "one fold and one shepherd." Let us hope that to this state we are approaching; and that as inferior distinctions are becoming absorbed in the greater, they will also, by a continuance of the same operation, at length vanish, and sects and creeds will bow their usurping heads before the name of Christian and the apostolic confession, "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."

Meanwhile the great cause of civil and religious liberty has been advanced. The latter was very imperfectly understood and practised at the Reformation. It was claimed or denied, as parties were in or out of power. Often was it claimed for societies, but denied by them to individuals. Unitarianism sprang up in the bosom of other denominations, and its votaries claimed in their own defence real religious liberty, viz. individual liberty in a Christian Church. With its progress the subject has become better understood. It is remarkable, that when Trinitarianism originally sprang up in a similar way, it was followed by no similar result: till it acquired influence, it was timid; and then, tyrannous. This shows a difference of spirit and tendency. In the first four centuries, doctrinal corruption and ecclesiastical domination advanced hand in hand; together were they born, together did they revel on human sacrifices, and together shall they perish. The same malignant star ruled at their nativity, and the same triumphal shout shall peal the glad tidings of their destruction around the enlightened and liberated globe. And will the man of high and just and liberal spirit in religion be in politics the slave or the enslaver? Is not the connection most intimate between religious and civil freedom? They identify themselves. Religious liberty is a civil right; to assert it is a Christian duty. By enlightened principles of theology are minds nurtured which are prompt firmly to claim their due, and faithfully to discharge their duty—men who will be just to their country and to the world.

This rapid view of the results of the Unitarian controversy, results so decidedly beneficial, not only proves the utility of controversy, as a means for the discovery and promotion of truth, but indicates our duty, and confirms our hopes. It exhibits the arms and triumphs of Unitarianism. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds: casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

The present state of Unitarianism is most encouraging to its advocates. It has advanced in defiance of prejudices the most obstinate and extensive, and amid the assaults and anathemas of almost all the sects into which Christianity is distributed. Till within the last fifty years it scarcely existed in Britain but as the religion of individuals; but since that time numerous congregations have been formed; it has been embraced by the greater part of the Presbyterian and General Baptist denominations; and has received large accessions from other classes. It has been preached to the poor, and they have heard it gladly. Whole societies of Methodists, guided only by the Bible, have adopted its tenets, even without being aware that there were any other persons in the world of a similar faith. A considerable body of Unitarians exists in Transylvania; numbers are scattered over the Continent; and the Reformed churches seem generally to be receding with a slow and silent, but not uncertain progress, from the harsh doctrines of their ancestors; at Geneva, the temple of Calvin is become the monument of Servetus; a Unitarian Church has sprung up at Madras, consisting of natives, who are chiefly converts from Heathenism; while the progress already made, and the opportunities afforded, in America, promise a career of triumph through that widely extended empire. Unitarianism is no longer the seed sown by the way-side, exposed to destruction from the birds of the air or the foot of the passenger, from gloomy skies or a sterile soil; it has taken root, and sprung up, and put forth its branches far and wide; the river of life flows round and nourishes it; the dews of heaven descend upon it; and when we are laid in the dust, others shall rise to admire its beauty, stability, and progressive increase, till the earth be covered with its shade, and filled with its fruits.

That Unitarianism shall become coextensive with Christianity, and Christianity be the religion of the world, are expectations resting on the same basis—the power of Truth. Probably neither of these events will be brought about, though both may be accelerated, by proselyting. The progress of Unitarianism is less important than the progress *towards* it of the rest of the Christian community; especially if we observe the connection of this change with the cultivation of biblical criticism, with just notions of religious liberty, and with the general diffusion of education and knowledge. The purity of Christianity may be restored, as it was lost, by a gradual and general movement. And in the same manner may Christianity itself prevail over other religions; increasing light leading to the detection of one error after another, until there shall remain only the easy transition from belief in the truths which Jesus taught to an admission of his authority as the Son of God.

That "Truth is mighty, and will prevail," is an assertion which has grown by common consent into a principle, or axiom, rather serving as proof for other propositions than needing for itself the labour of examination and array of evidence. It is the dictate of experience. The progress of the human race, as to knowledge in general, is analogous to that of the individual in the acquisition of physical truth. The perceptions of the infant are continually erroneous. One sense gradually corrects another; and notions of distance, magnitude, and colour, at first confused and deceptive, are by repeated observation reduced to truth and order. There is a continual acquisition of information by the senses of the individual and by the intellect of the race. The one process begins afresh with each; the other is carried on from generation to generation. Knowledge once published becomes the property of the world. Where evidence is adduced, and the mind is impartial, it is obvious that truth must always prevail over error. Now towards this state of candour in the judgment, and complete evidence as to the subject, does all discussion and discovery tend. To this point they are continually advancing; and that approximation is a security for the ultimate reception of truth by all. There are obstacles in the passions, habits, and pursuits of men; but they are neither eternal nor invincible. They are comparatively weak; they are temporary; they are self-destructive. What shall successfully attempt to stay the march of truth? Shall ignorance? And what is there in ignorance to insure its own eternity? It has no power. It is but a negation: a blank which may be filled up; waste land which may be cultivated. It has been diminishing for ages, and diminishes every day. Its resistance is that of emptiness to substance, of nothing to existence.—Shall education? This may do much for prolonging error, may transmit it from generation to generation; but not for ever. Its power is equal on the side of truth; and, therefore, if resistless, it would prevent our retrograding. But who is there among you that has not met with numerous instances of its yielding to personal conviction? How many are yourselves monuments of its inability to withstand the force of evidence!—Shall antiquity and authority? They often reconcile to absurdity and sanctify falsehood: but where are the proofs of their permanently rebutting truth? Did they protect the temples of Jupiter and Mars, and save them from becoming Christian Churches? Could they rivet the chains of Popery on our ancestors, when they arose in might to snap them asunder? Do they now preserve what men follow the decision of a thousand years in deeming the holiest mysteries of faith from free discussion and complete rejection? Oh, no; they are no invincible barrier; they have been trampled down by hostile feet, and have borne the banners of triumphant foes.—Shall political authority, interest, persecution? What institutions can pretend to perpetuity? What is history but the record of their changes? The establishment of error cannot enable it permanently to resist knowledge and inquiry. For a time it may be upheld by bribery; external respect may be enforced; and opposition be fiercely avenged: but this cannot last; conscience cannot be permanently bribed, nor thought imprisoned. Institutions must give way to, or fall before, the improving spirit of the times. Persecution is becoming obsolete. The puny efforts which public opinion now allows it to make, only resist the advance of mind as reeds stay the torrent, or straws impede the whirlwind.

We have "a more sure word of prophecy." Christianity asserts its own future universality. Our Lord, by his parables of the grain of mustard seed which became a spreading tree, and of the leaven which pervaded the whole mass, intimated the indefinite increase of his religion. He taught to pray, and therefore to hope, that the kingdom of God might come, and his "will be done on the earth as it is in heaven." That spiritual kingdom, according to ancient prediction, was to "stand for ever," and "fill the whole earth" (Dan. ii.). "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isaiah xi. 9). "All the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God" (Isaiah lii. 10). The Lord will "destroy the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations" (Isaiah xxv. 7). Such prophecies as these are continually occurring in reference to the spiritual reign of the Messiah. I will only add, that as Daniel, Paul, and John, in passages formerly adduced, connect the spread of the gospel with the destruction of Antichrist, it is also blended with the conversion of the Jews. "Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in: and so all Israel shall be saved" (Rom. xi. 25).

Truth must prevail. History records that it has no resistless enemy. It is the heritage of man, and he advances to its possession; its prevalence is the promise of scripture, and prophecy shall be accomplished; it is the object of Providence, and Providence is universal; it is favoured of God, and God is omnipotent. We rejoice in prospect, whether the success of truth be that of our opinions, or of others. Perish error, though we may wander in its mazes! If our workmanship be only wood, hay, and stubble, let it be consumed, and ourselves saved as by fire, so that the temple of truth be purified from every incumbrance and pollution. But we believe that Unitarianism is truth, is Christianity. It bears all their sacred characters, and claims their promised universality. Prophecy envelopes them in a common glory, and decrees for them the same splendid destiny. "The Lord shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall there be One Lord, and his name One."

For a time, indeed, this union was dissolved; and with it fled the energy of Christianity. Only with its revival can the gospel again go forth, "conquering and to conquer." Corruption led to wealth and political authority: but they were ineffectual substitutes for truth. Not only did what was called Christianity cease to spread, but it actually succumbed before imposture; and Mahometanism made more progress in five-and-twenty years than nominal Christianity in fourteen centuries. The Trinity, and similar and kindred doctrines, are the great obstacles to its diffusion. No extensive accession of enlightened converts can be expected anterior to their removal. That event approaches; nor does the interval of darkness and corruption affect our hopes, for it was foreseen, and its termination fixed, by the same authority as that which gives them confidence. God has sketched for us a plan of the march of truth. Her path is drawn through dark caverns and gloomy wilds; but ending on the lofty mountain of wide dominion. Into that deep abyss she entered, and through that howling wilderness her steps have passed. Already she emerges, and climbs the promised elevation; nor can we doubt her attainment of its summit, to reign there in permanent and unrivalled majesty. How felicitous then will be the power of pure religion over society! all weakening corruptions removed—the hypocrisy that disgusts, the superstition that degrades, the pride that insults! No longer polluted by being made subservient to the policy of states or the arts of priests, how rapid and blissful will be its career, restraining the passions of men, advancing their improvement, and blending nations into brotherhood! But Reformation must precede diffusion. Unitarianism must herald the universality of Christianity—must go before, like the Baptist, to prepare its way; to level the mountains of prejudice; to make straight the crooked ways of mystery and superstition; to smooth the rough places of bigotry; and then "shall the glory of the Lord be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

LECTURE VI.—ON WAR.

"And they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isaiah ii. 4).

OUR present subject should, according to an arrangement strictly logical, form merely a subdivision of the next and concluding Lecture, on the Perfectibility of Man. The human race has been, I believe, gradually advancing, notwithstanding many apparent interruptions, and even retrograde movements, and is destined to a still more rapid and brilliant course of improvement, which will chiefly be effected by the agency of Christianity, purified from the corruptions that have palsied its strength and perverted its influence. In reviewing the obstacles which impede the salutary operations of pure religion on the destiny of mankind, war presents itself, foremost and preëminent, as most hideous in itself, and most formidable in its resistance. I give it a separate discussion, to discharge that Lecture of a topic far too momentous to be made only a secondary consideration, and also, by showing what views may be held of its final abolition, to prepare the way for unembarrassed attention to the general prospects of the nations of the earth, as involved in the designs of Providence and the promises of revelation.

The present is a favourable time for this discussion. We are at peace with all the world—long may we remain so! Were it otherwise, it would be a duty not to shrink from telling the truth of God, though to reluctant ears, and in spite of malicious tongues. That a particular application would be made of general reflections, that a remonstrance against war would be interpreted of any particular contest in which the country might be engaged, and considered a sign of disaffection, as well as of enthusiasm, would not excuse the professor of Christianity from reminding his brethren and countrymen of the violated laws and spirit of the gospel. If a nation be criminal, at the bar of God let that nation be arraigned, by the word of God let that nation be condemned. But at such a time, the clamour of the interested would be raised; the timid, the ignorant, and the unthinking would be alarmed and imposed on, and the subject would have to struggle with accumulated difficulties. Now it is likelier to have a fair hearing, and to produce beneficial effects. The late contest has left here, and in other realms, a wholesome weariness with war, which should be improved by those who are on principle the friends of peace. The public, at least all who think, seem to be feeling much like the ruined spendthrift on his wild excesses, and the condemned malefactor on his criminal passions. Those who wish well to human interests should seize such a moment, and exert themselves, on this subject, to form just opinions and diffuse useful information. The labour would not be lost, as to either the ultimate object or the immediate influence.

We comprise the object of this discourse in one sentence—War is a great, *but not insuperable,* obstacle to that general improvement in the state of man which Christianity tends, and was designed, to realise.

War is opposed to the well-being and progress of society by the misery it inflicts, the criminality it implies, and the mischiefs it produces. To men of human feelings, Christian principles, and general benevolence, it is unnecessary to advance laboured proof of these assertions. Nothing more is required than attention to the subject.

From the humblest agent whom poverty or folly may have driven or cajoled into military service, or the wretchedest inhabitant of the seat of hostilities, to the vast empires by which they are waged, war is associated with *suffering.* Scenes may be shifted, and success may vary, but the misery is permanent. It is alike the sad accompaniment of the lamentation for defeat, and of the joyous song of victory. There is nothing of good but what is foreign, ambiguous, and accidental. The evil is great, inseparable, and essential. Trace it in the field of battle. What multitudes are there assembled, that the scythe of death may mow them down with greater facility—that not individuals, but thousands, may be levelled at a stroke! Dreadful scene of indiscriminate slaughter! There perish the mighty and renowned, there the young, the healthy, and the vigorous. The qualities which, in the ordinary course of things, seem to promise exemption from the ravages of mortality, there only recommend them for the sacrifice, and fit them to be victims. And surround it as we may with epithets of glory, or think to reward it with the meed of fame, still what a death is the soldier's! What rational being would thus take the awful step into the unseen world? what Christian would wish the fierce passions or unmitigated agonies of that scene to be his last earthly feeling, his preparation for standing at the bar of God? For the bed of death one would wish all that is soothing and consolatory. Wretched and comfortless is the soldier's fate. He is alone in the midst of thousands. The vanquished in their hasty flight, the victors in their hot pursuit, care not for him. On the cold ground he lies, forsaken, mangled, and trampled on; no tender hand to stanch the flowing blood or raise his fainting frame; no kind tongue to whisper consolation: he thinks, perhaps distractedly, of those loved ones who should have encompassed his dying bed; but his sickening glance meets only sights of horror, and he hears only piercing groans, and frantic shouts, and bitter shrieks, and the roar of that deadly thunder which strews the field with companions in misery. But comparatively few fall in the field: of greater numbers fatigue and disease are the lingering and loathsome destiny. If the grass yet grows bright and green on the plains of Waterloo, fed with the rotting carcasses of thousands who bled in battle, there are plains yet in Russia, their surface bleached with the bones of the best of France and Italy, who were levelled by no hostile blow, but who sank under the cold, famine, and fatigue of that disastrous retreat. All protracted warfare is the prolongation of misery in a thousand forms, more agonising than what is suffered in the bloodiest field of battle. Often does it make men pray for death, as a release from present anguish. But not to conflicting armies are confined the evils of war: they are the centre of mischief, but it spreads around them widely; they are the nucleus of crime and misery, but large is its pestilential atmosphere. Wherever they go, they carry desolation,—they devour like locusts,—they blast like lightning,—they destroy like the volcano,—they overwhelm like the earthquake. Little is spared by plunder, revenge, or wantonness. At their approach, harvests vanish, and burning villages are torches to light their march. Law is at an end: life, honour, property, are held on sufferance by the mercy of the sword. Oh, what have the peaceful inhabitants to recount, by whose abodes this torrent has rolled! They have survived scenes, they have tales to tell, which, long as they remember, shall wring their hearts, which their tongues shall falter to repeat, and at which the listening traveller shall shudder. Nor in escaping from the seat of war to the remotest nations involved in it can we escape its horrors. They have a kind of infernal omnipresence. The warrior is seldom an isolated being. Far distant from the field on which he conquers or dies, or the hospital in which he lingers, there may be many a bosom throbbing with anxiety for him. His sufferings are multiplied in theirs. He may, perhaps, perish instantaneously; but they long suffer from anxiety or mourn in anguish. On him is dealt the fatal stroke, but they feel the wound. The aged widow, tottering to the grave, weeps the child who should have soothed and supported her declining years. The mother bends in unutterable anguish over her orphaned babes; the heart of affection is torn in sunder; every sympathy of life is turned to bitterness and poison. In this favoured land, we have long been exempted from the immediate presence of war: on British ground, not one of you has heard the roar of battle, or seen its carnage; but who has not heard the voice of mourning? In those days when giddy crowds pealed high their acclamations, how many a bereaved one fled from the joyous uproar to the solitude of comfortless sorrow! How many does war deprive of all the comforts of life, by crippling industry, baffling foresight in its vicissitudes, and from its enormous expenditure forcing every thing into an unnatural state! In this country, how many families did the late war find happy, opulent, and respectable; and leave in beggary! At different periods, what scenes of complicated wretchedness have many of our large towns presented! How enormous were the strides of pauperism! It is the tendency of war to produce war, and thus to extend and multiply miseries. Treaties of peace seem little better than links to connect one war with another. They leave something ambiguous for future dissension, some germ of discord, which grows into a poison-tree. Indeed, the professed object of hostility is seldom determined in favour of either party by the peace. In the series of wars which have for ages desolated Europe, we may generally see one growing out of another. The various connections and interests of nations serve to spread hostility when once commenced. This was particularly exemplified in the late contest, into which nation after nation was drawn or forced. The torrent of blood swelled as it rolled on; still fresh sluices opened, till it spread and widened, and seemed without fathom or bound. Like the avalanche from the mountain's top, it rushed on, accumulating as it fell, and finding in one work of ruin materials to render the next more wide and dreadful. It stretched from the Old World to the New, wrapping both continents in its flames, and covering the earth as with a fiery deluge of desolation.* Let us turn to its *moral* character.

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* The horrors of war are but slightly adverted to, either in the

War is one great crime. It is not so much a violation as a repeal of the laws of morality and of God. The precepts of the Bible are directly opposed to the maxims of war. The fundamental rule of the first is to do good, of

Lecture or the Appendix, for the obvious reason that the general design and the limits of the Lectures neither required nor permitted any extended illustration of them. In various publications on the events of the late war, and especially in Labaume's *Russian Campaign*, the reader whose nerves will allow the steady contemplation of the most appalling pictures of human wickedness and misery may "sup full of horrors." Some extracts are introduced from an article in the *Edinburgh Review* for February 1815, on the above-mentioned work, not more on account of the facts, than of the remarks appended to them, which will not be ascribed to the influence of religious enthusiasm or the weakness of an impracticable benevolence.

"Our author, who was posted at a small village on the right, in reserve, here learned that the town (Smolensko) had been stormed, after a sanguinary combat, during which it was set on fire by the Russians. On the 19th of August he entered the place with his corps, and his description of the scene which he witnessed presents an affecting picture of the horrors of war. 'In every direction we marched over scattered ruins and dead bodies. Palaces, still burning, offered to our sight only walls half-destroyed by the flames, and thick among the fragments were the blackened carcasses of the wretched inhabitants whom the fire had consumed. The few houses that remained were completely filled with the soldiery, while at the door stood the miserable proprietor, without an asylum, deploring the death of his children and the loss of his fortune. The churches alone afforded some consolation to the unhappy victims who had no other shelter. The cathedral, celebrated throughout Europe, and held in great veneration by the Russians, became the refuge of the unfortunate beings who had escaped the flames. In this church, and round its altars, were seen whole families extended on the ground.'"

After the battle of the Moskwa, "the ground, for about the space of a square league, was literally covered with the dead and wounded. In many places, the bursting of shells had promiscuously heaped together men and horses. The fire of the howitzers had been so destructive, that heaps of bodies lay scattered over the plain; and where the ground was not incumbered with the slain, it was covered with broken lances, muskets, helmets, and cuirasses, or with grape-shot and bullets, as numerous as hailstones after a violent storm. 'But the most horrid spectacle' (continues our author) 'was the interior of the ravines, where almost all the wounded who were able to drag themselves along had taken refuge, to avoid further injury. These miserable creatures, heaped one upon another, and swimming in their blood, uttered the most heartrending groans. They frequently invoked death with piercing cries, and eagerly besought us to put an end to their agonies.' Such are some of the details of this *glorious battle*, which we lay before our readers, not for the purpose of shocking their feelings, but because we think they serve to place what is the latter, to inflict injuries; the former commands us to succour the oppressed, the latter, to overwhelm the defenceless; the former teaches men to love their enemies, the latter, to make themselves terrible even to strangers.

called military glory in its true light, and thus, in some measure, to correct those false impressions under which mankind have been in all ages so much blinded to the true nature of the warrior's exploits. They would answer a still greater purpose, if they would tend to soften the hearts of those cold and calculating politicians, who make war without any consideration of its miseries, and regard the plea of humanity as a vulgar commonplace, altogether unfit to be taken into the account of their magnanimous deliberations."

During the conflagration of Moscow, the hospitals, which contained 20,000 wounded Russians, were consumed. "This" (says Labaume) "offered a harrowing and dreadful spectacle. Almost all of these miserable creatures perished. A few, who still lingered, were seen crawling, half-burnt, among the smoking ruins; and others, groaning under heaps of dead bodies, endeavoured in vain to extricate themselves from the horrible destruction which surrounded them."

Often, in the retreat, "they had no wood, and to make their fires they destroyed the houses in which the generals lodged; sometimes, therefore, when we awoke in the morning, the village which we had seen the night before had disappeared, and towns which to-day were untouched would form on the morrow one vast conflagration."

The concluding remark of the Reviewer especially deserves attention: "By its very constitution, an army seems to be the natural instrument of violence and injustice. A thorough-bred soldier is the mere creature of command. His warrant is, in all cases, the order of his superior, to whose views he blindly conforms, however adverse they may be to the peace and happiness of society; while the occupations in which he is engaged have a natural tendency to produce, in the lower orders, a disdain and impatience of peaceful industry; in the higher, a restless and turbulent ambition; and in both, a brutal contempt for the comfort and the feelings of every other description of men."

In the *Christian Reformer* for July 1815 are extracts from the letters of an officer serving in Spain and the south of France, which amply show that war is much the same in the miseries it causes, wheresoever and by whomsoever waged.

A work of fiction, published by Louis Bonaparte, has some passages upon this subject, which are curious as coming from one who had filled a throne, and which are expressed in a tone and manner strongly indicative of their being the language of truth and real feeling. He is describing a field of battle: "A thousand voices addressed me in the most heartrending manner, imploring assistance. One expired in asking for it; another in repulsing, through the convulsions of death, the proffered hand! Our own wounded could not be distinguished from those of the enemy. I thought myself on those infernal plains where the guilty groan for ever, and have no resource, because they are watched over by no Providence! I know not what secret voice arose within me against war. I have seen a father, a

The rules of morality will not suffer us to promote the dearest interest by falsehood; the maxims of war applaud it when employed in the destruction of others. The Bible says, "Thou shalt not kill;" war enjoins, Kill—the greater number, the more glorious: the Bible commands, "Thou shalt not steal;" plunder is of war both cause and consequence and indissoluble companion: the gospel says, "Overcome evil with good;" but war exhorts to subdue evil by greater evil, and more tremendous malignity: the one says, "Bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you;" and the other, Carry outrage, misery, and murder amongst those who have excited no anger,

brother, and a son, even after the heat of battle, cut the throat of a defenceless old man; I have seen the brains of an infant beaten out in its cradle; and a young girl dying under bloody embraces. I have seen men go like sheep to certain death, led by the phantoms of honour and glory. I have seen men considered as vile and brittle instruments, which other men threw away, and broke to pieces without regret. I have heard a minister of state say, that he had *spent* so many men in a campaign!"

I will only prolong this note by a tale from Ferguson's *History of Civil Society*, the recollection of which was suggested by the mercantile mode of speaking attributed to statesmen by the ex-king of Holland:

"In small, rude societies, the individual finds himself attacked in every national war; and none can propose to devolve his defence on another. 'The King of Spain is a great prince,' said an American chief to the governor of Jamaica, who was preparing a body of troops to join an enterprise against the Spaniards; 'do you propose to make war upon so great a king with so small a force?' Being told that the forces he saw were to be joined by troops from Europe, and that the governor could then command no more: 'Who are these, then,' said the American, 'who form this crowd of spectators? Are they not your people? And why do you not all go forth to so great a war?' He was answered, that the spectators were merchants, and other inhabitants, who took no part in the service. 'Would they be merchants still,' continued this statesman, 'if the King of Spain was to attack you here? For my part, I do not think that merchants should be permitted to live in any country; when I go to war, I leave nobody at home but the women.' It should seem that this simple warrior considered merchants as a kind of neutral persons, who took no part in the quarrels of their country; and that he did not know how much war itself may be made a subject of traffic; what mighty armies may be put in motion from behind the counter; how often human blood is, without any national animosity, bought and sold for bills of exchange; and how often the prince, the nobles, and the statesmen, in many a polished nation, might, in his account, be considered as merchants."

inflicted no injury. Who shall make these principles coalesce?

But surely *defensive war* is justifiable. And what *is* defensive war? According to the language of courts, almost every war that ever was waged has been a defensive war, and on both sides too. *The defence of what?* Of usurped territory, of obsolete claims to dominion, of arrogant pretensions, of the lordship of distant colonies, of imaginary interests, of individual assumptions of royalty, and of a thousand absurd and wicked things which war has been made to defend; as if changing a term could obliterate a crime! If by the phrase be only meant that, when a land is invaded, its inhabitants take up arms to repel the intruders, and lay them down when that is done,—it is a case not now under discussion; it is not properly called *war;* nor, if this be all, should it be involved in the same censure. The criminality of wars is seen in their authors, their agents, and their effects on society.

The authors and promoters of wars incur a dreadful responsibility. The most favourable statement which can be made is, that they err in calculation, by thinking that war would advance the interests of their country. This error is gross enough; for where is the war on record that proved really advantageous to *the people?* They set all experience at defiance, and throw away the lives of multitudes upon a desperate game of chances. And should it be successful, the good of the victors must be much less than the sum of evil which they and the losers share; so that in the most plausible case they are condemned, as sacrificing to selfish patriotism the dictates of philanthropy. The real motives are generally still worse. It is sometimes an expedient to take off public attention from the correction of internal evils; sometimes engaged in to gratify the pride, passion, or ambition of princes. What motives have of late years fostered the love of war in this country? Some desired it to raise the price of corn; others, to destroy the commerce of rival countries, and gain us the monopoly of the markets of the world; others, for the opportunities afforded of gaining wealth or honours. Is all this morally innocent? Are classes of men to write, with impunity, their caprices in a people's blood, or build their greatness on a people's ruin?

As to the *military profession*, the abolition of which would be now equivalent to that of war, without at all censuring those who may conscientiously enter into it or approve of it, I have no hesitation myself in coming to the opinion, that it is utterly inconsistent with Christianity. The soldier hires himself out to kill at the command of others. Did he only fight when convinced of the justice of the cause, the case would be very different; but he gives up the right of deciding on that. If a war, begun, as he thinks, in a just cause, by some change of circumstances become unjust in its continuance, he cannot withdraw; and the established maxim is, that he is to leave that to his superiors. What is he, in such a case, but a paid and licensed murderer? The terms seem harsh; are they not just? God has pronounced him guilty who sheds his fellow's blood; there may be an exception for self-defence; but for the command of superiors there is no exception. Mr. Scargill, in his short but excellent essay on War, avows the same opinions: "He who wantonly puts a fellow-creature to death is guilty of murder; and he who puts a fellow-creature to death without knowing why is equally guilty; the cause may be good, but if he knows it not, he is a murderer. No casuistry can save him from the guilt of it. He may conclude that they who lead him to slaughter know and are assured of the justice of the cause; but unless he knows it also, he is in the sight of God guilty of violating the laws of heaven. A man may be honestly engaged in the service of a certain cause, in which circumstances may lead him to war,—and if fighting may be justified at all, it may be right in certain circumstances,—but he is not thereby bound to fight in every cause which his superiors may adopt." The plain question is, Does the command of a superior justify a violation of the laws of God? If it does for the hired soldier, it does also for the hired assassin. Suppose a man were to go to Copenhagen, and shoot a person whom he never saw before; then to Washington, and stab another, by whom he was never injured; then to the coast of France, and burn a third in his own house: what would all this be but repeated and atrocious murder? Would its moral character be changed by the command of a prince, minister, or general? Certainly not; any more than their command would justify perjury or forgery. Indeed, the vindicators of war must plead that they would justify these also. Armies need spies, and spies must deceive; and forgery was more than once or twice employed in the late contest with great applause.

What a school of morals, into which to drain off the youthful part of the population of a country; after some years of education in it, to be turned back upon society! All habits of regular industry gone, accustomed to take by force, familiarised with wounds and blood, their duty slaughtering, and their diversion gambling or debauchery, what is to be expected when they are disbanded?—what, but that which always happens—robberies, murders, crowded gaols, disgusting executions! The commencement of peace sometimes doubles, and more than doubles, the number of criminals; uniformly shows a fearful increase. The influx of such characters is like inoculating society with a moral pestilence.

This combination of calamity and guilt must prove and has proved a gloomy interruption of that progress which may still be traced in the history of mankind, and it clouds our prospects of futurity. It is as if an individual should resolve, at certain intervals, to give himself up to mischief, and to forget all distinction of right and wrong, virtue and vice, good and evil; to abandon the study of truth and the acquisition of goodness. Such an abandonment is war to nations.

It prevents civilisation. Tribes are kept in the savage state by wars with each other and with their more polished neighbours. The Slave Trade fomented hostility through a thousand petty kingdoms which might have been won by friendly intercourse to quietness, harmony, commerce, and improvement. Had America pursued a more generous policy towards the Aborigines of that continent, they might have all been induced, like those of them among whom the Quakers settled, to modify their habits and gain a social existence, instead of being destined, as they apparently are, to be exterminated by the sword of aggression. Civilisation, to some degree, has been the occasional and accidental result of conquest: it never was the object; and might have been better attained by better means. On the other hand, the most refined have been barbarised; and Rome itself, the luxurious and magnificent, beheld her sun go back in the heavens to the darkness from which it arose.

The cultivation of literature, the peaceful arts of life, the intercourse of different nations, which soften and obliterate prejudice, and diffuse over all others the discoveries and superiorities of one,—these great principles of improvement are all suspended by war, and for the time almost annihilated. The sword divides where oceans could not separate. It elevates prejudice and destroys philanthropy. Millions of men are taught to hate other millions, from whom they might receive useful knowledge, to whom they might render important service, with whom they might exchange affection and esteem. As war hires to execute slaughter the arm that should labour, it also hires to plan that slaughter the mind that should enlighten with philosophy and science. Its brutalising magic transforms even the energies of intellect into machines of desolation.

How fatal are wars to liberty! Standing armies make tyrants, where they do not find them. Why does all the world speak of Washington as a singular character? He commanded a victorious army, and did not become a military despot. The exception is likely to remain unparalleled. The absolute obedience of soldiers and the power of generals are fatal to civil liberty. Its death-warrant is signed in any country which aspires to conquest and military glory. Thus was Rome ruined. The armies made their commanders emperors, who by their aid made the people slaves, until the citizens, who in their days of freedom looked down on sovereigns, held property and life at the caprice of any fool or wretch or villain to whom the Prætorian bands gave the imperial crown, or sold it by public auction. Freedom is as essential to improvement as is the air we breathe to our existence. The ornamental arts, or lighter literature, may be the trappings of a tyrant's throne, but genius cannot breathe the atmosphere of slavery. Its productions wither in the shade of the despot's palace, though glittering with splendid ornaments; while they flourish on the barren rock, exposed to the winds and beaten by the storm. The captive Hebrews hung their harps on the willows of the proud Euphrates, but by the lowlier stream of Jordan they struck them joyously to the sweetest and loftiest songs of Zion. With liberty, farewell the strength and pride and glory of intellect—oppression first forges its fetters, and then digs its grave.

And are mankind always to be driven by ambition, like sheep to the shambles? Is there in the road of improvement to be at every step a stumbling-block? Yes, say some philosophers, whose doctrines have, from various causes, obtained a temporary prevalence; the world must always be subject to the scourge of war, to keep down the excess of population; and even were we arrived at Utopian felicity, this same tendency to excessive population would prevent its permanence, and bring back war to avert starvation. This, if true, drops the curtain on our hopes, and falsifies the wishes of benevolence and the promises of heaven. The effect on a state of high improvement, once gained, belongs to our next Lecture. We only ask now, What is really the effect of wars on population? The evil of excessive population consists, not in the absolute number, but in its extending beyond the means of subsistence. While there is food, numbers are advantageous. Their increase is a good, provided the means of subsistence increase also. As war is now conducted, that increase may be stopped or retarded; but the means of subsistence are diminished also, and in a greater proportion. By withdrawing hands from agriculture, and by enormous waste and destruction, it is the fact that war destroys the means of living in a greater proportion than it destroys life; and consequently leaves society in a worse condition, as to the real or imagined evil of a redundant population, than at its commencement. It is as if a community, in danger of famine, should destroy a hundred of its members, and in the struggle waste the food of two hundred; they would be in greater danger than before. And while the effect of war on the amount of population compared with the means of subsistence has been overlooked, its influence on the absolute amount has been greatly overrated. Even during the late destructive contests, the population of the greater part of Europe increased considerably. To a certain extent, war acts rather as a stimulus than as a check. The demand for men produces a supply; and while he can pay for them, the slaughter-house of the conqueror, like that of the butcher, will not want a supply of victims. But enough of an objection which is only formidable because it is fashionable.

The hope that nations may ever have sufficient wisdom and goodness to decide their differences by a more rational mode than hiring men to cut throats and burn towns, is so commonly scouted as visionary, that it is expedient to appeal to fact and experience, and inquire what improvement has already taken place on this very subject. Perhaps if, fifty or sixty years ago, some of these cold-hearted philosophers had been asked which would be abolished first, the Slave Trade or War, they might have hesitated: both were under the patronage of governments, both could plead the prescription of antiquity, both seemed the interest of large and powerful bodies of men, and had nothing against them but reason and justice. They would have hesitated, and deemed it a choice between two impossibilities. And the Slave Trade *is* abolished, and its practice is felony. Two facts are cheering. 1. Peace now scarcely differs more from war than modern warfare does from ancient. We see in barbarous states what war must have been originally. It is mere slaughter. No quarter is given; all advantages are taken. Among the New Zealanders and Aboriginal Americans there is nothing like the openness and honour of European conflict. To lie in wait and rush unawares upon their prey; to fire upon him from unsuspected ambush; to steal in the dead of night, set fire to the huts, and massacre the inhabitants as they fly naked and defenceless from the flames,—these are their deeds of glory. In Greece and Rome the vanquished had only the alternative of death or slavery. What would be thought now of the insulting ceremony of leading princes and nobles through the streets, chained to a triumphal chariot, for the mob to gaze at, and then dismissing them to menial attendance on their victors? The proportion of the numbers slain to those engaged is trifling now in comparison with the battles of antiquity; to say nothing of wars of cold-blooded massacre and complete extermination. The improvements in the art of war have pretty uniformly tended to make it more a matter of calculation and less of force and slaughter. Perhaps, too, the advance of physical science may lead to discoveries and inventions which will have an unexpected and happy influence. At first, brute strength alone decided contests. Discipline took off part of its superiority; and the use of gunpowder almost equalises the weak with the strong. May not some future invention level the many with the few, or at least provide means of defence which will baffle an immense superiority of numbers? Destructive machinery seems peculiarly adapted for this purpose. The torpedo may be improved so as to protect the fishing-boat from the man-of-war, and secure the coast from desolation. However we shudder at such instruments, they may, perhaps, be brought to an infernal perfection, which will serve the cause of humanity, by infinitely multiplying the perils of encroachment and attack. However this may be, it is obvious that there is more of mind in the conduct of war and of humanity in its operations. Half the horrors of ancient warfare have vanished.* What is to stop the progress here? 2. The tendencies of society have been, and are, to limit war, and consequently to abolish it ultimately. It cannot take place now in numerous situations where it used to rage. The formation of society stops individual hostilities. Private war, once so general and destructive, is abolished. In England once baron warred upon baron, and castle against castle hoisted the flag of defiance.

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* "The ancient republics were almost in perpetual war. The maxims of ancient war were much more destructive than those of modern; chiefly by the distribution of plunder in which the soldiers were indulged. The battles of antiquity, both by their duration and their resemblance to single combats, were wrought up to a degree of fury quite unknown to later ages. Nothing could then engage the combatants to give quarter but the hopes of profit by making slaves of their prisoners. In civil wars, as we learn from Tacitus, the battles were the most bloody, because the prisoners were not slaves.

"What a stout resistance must be made, when the vanquished expected so hard a fate! How inveterate the rage, when the maxims of war were in every respect so bloody and severe!

"Instances are very frequent in ancient history of cities besieged, whose inhabitants, rather than open their gates, murdered their wives and children, and rushed themselves on a voluntary death, sweetened, perhaps, with a little prospect of revenge upon the enemy. Greeks, as well as Barbarians, have been wrought up to this degree of fury.

"Sometimes the wars in Greece, says Plutarch, were carried on entirely by inroads and robberies and piracies. Such a method of war must be more destructive in small states than the bloodiest battles and sieges.

"The only cartel I remember in ancient history is that betwixt Demetrius Poliorcetes and the Rhodians; when it was agreed that a free citizen should be restored for 1000 drachmas, a slave bearing arms for 500" (HUME's *Essay on the Populousness of Ancient Nations*).

Those combats have ceased, and for ever. What rivers of blood have Scotch and English shed in desperate struggles! From all appearance, they have waged their last war with each other. Had the United States of America been, by different formation and circumstances, disunited kingdoms or republics, what incessant and bloody conflicts would have deluged that continent! In this respect, the tendency of small states to coalesce into larger, and of larger ones to a sort of federal union, is auspicious to mankind. At present all the great powers of Europe are in alliance: this may be only the coalition of governors. Supposing all those governors to become the faithful guardians of free nations, that union might remain—the arbiter of national disputes, the congress of peace and justice.

The wide diffusion of knowledge and Christianity, which we have already seen good reason to anticipate, and the hope of which will be further confirmed by considerations to which we shall hereafter advert, encourages us to argue from the manifest guilt and folly of wars to their disuse and abolition. Let but the great majority become enlightened, and although certain classes of society may still be interested in exciting appeals to the sword, there can be no want of means to prevent the sacrifice of the general good to their vanity, avarice, or madness. Wars may be divided, according to their causes, into four principal classes:

1. *Wars for disputed sovereignty.* The crown of England was long contested by the two houses of York and Lancaster. An historian, speaking of the battle of Tewkesbury, which seated Edward IV. on the throne, says, "This was the twelfth battle that had been fought in this fatal quarrel; and in these battles, and on the scaffold, above sixty princes of the royal family, above one-half of the nobles and principal gentlemen, and above one hundred thousand of the common people, lost their lives." And what followed? The licentiousness of Edward, the usurpation of Richard, the grinding avarice of Henry VII., and the wanton tyranny of Henry VIII. Had the common people possessed common sense, would they not have left the houses, or the nobles, if they pleased, to fight it out themselves? What to them was York or Lancaster? The crown has since been bestowed more rationally; not by divine right, ascertained in battle, but by Act of Parlia-

ment, in defiance of succession: on William III., Anne, George I. and the house of Hanover, it was thus conferred. These scenes will never be reacted in this country. Their folly must be seen in all countries; and when seen, however individuals or families might be wicked enough to aim at their revival, they would find that, losing the opinions and prejudices of the multitude, they had also lost the direction of their physical force. What a fine contrast to Yorkists, Lancastrians, Stuarts, Bourbons, and all the rest who "wade through slaughter to a throne," was Richard Cromwell! He was advised to take off a seditious leader, and secure his father's elevation for himself. "No," said he, "I will not purchase authority at the price of one man's blood."*

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* *Summary View of Wars in England, occasioned by disputed Claims of the Crown, from Sidney's "Discourses on Government."*—"But the miseries of England upon the like occasions surpass all. William the Norman was no sooner dead, but the nation was rent in pieces by his son Robert contesting with his younger sons, William and Henry, for the crown. They being all dead, and their sons, the like happened between Stephen and Maud: Henry II. was made king to terminate all disputes, but it proved a fruitless expedient. Such as were more scandalous, and not less dangerous, did soon arise between him and his sons; who, besides the evils brought upon the nation, vexed him to death by their rebellion. The reigns of John and Henry III. were yet more tempestuous. Edward II.'s lewd, foolish, infamous, and detestable government ended in his deposition and death, to which he was brought by his wife and son. Edward III. employed his own and his subjects' valour against the French and Scots; but whilst the foundations were out of order, the nation could never receive any advantage by their victories. All was calculated for the glory and turned to the advantage of one man. He being dead, all that the English held in Scotland and in France was lost through the baseness of his successor, with more blood than it had been gained; and the civil wars raised by his wickedness and madness ended as those of Edward had done. The peace of Henry IV.'s reign was interrupted by dangerous civil wars; and the victory obtained at Shrewsbury had not perhaps secured him on the throne if his death had not prevented new troubles. Henry V. acquired such reputation by his virtue and victories, that none dared to invade the crown during his life; but immediately after his death, the storms prepared against his family broke out with the utmost violence. His son's weakness encouraged Richard Duke of York to set up a new title, which produced such mischiefs as hardly any people has suffered, unless upon the like occasion; for besides the slaughter of many thousands of the people, and especially of those who had been accustomed to arms, the devastation of the best parts of the kingdom, and the loss of all that our kings had inherited in

2. *Wars of conquest and usurpation.* Such as those of Edward III. and Henry V. in France, by which the people got nothing for their blood and treasure, but the pleasure of seeing the lilies in the royal arms. What conquest was ever worth its purchase, even to any one? The only gain from them is to the pride of the monarch and the avarice of the favourites, who may then acquire plunder. Will nations always sacrifice themselves for these; or for what is baser still, the gratification of commercial rapacity? For trade now prompts to wars of encroachment and usurpation, as well as ambition.

3. *Wars of passion, revenge, and glory.* To these, democracies are as liable as monarchies. They flow from that military spirit which leaders foster for their own

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France or gained by the blood of their subjects, fourscore princes of the blood, as Philip de Commines calls them, died in battle, or under the hand of the hangman. Many of the most noble families were extinguished; others lost their most eminent men. Three kings and two presumptive heirs of the crown were murdered, and the nation brought to that shameful exigence, to set up a young man to reign over them who had no better cover for his sordid extraction than a Welsh pedigree, that might show how a tailor was descended from Prince Arthur, Cadwallader, and Brutus. But the wounds of the nation were not to be healed with such a plaster. He could not rely on a title made up of such stuff, and patched with a marriage to a princess of a very questionable birth. His own meanness inclined him to hate the nobility; and thinking it to be as easy for them to take the crown from him as to give it to him, he industriously applied himself to glean up the remainders of the house of York, from whence a competitor might arise, and by all means to crush those who were most able to oppose him. This exceedingly weakened the nobility, who held the balance between him and the commons, and was the first step towards the dissolution of our ancient government; but he was so far from settling the kingdom in peace, that such rascals as Perkin Warbeck and Simnel were able to disturb it. The reign of Henry VIII. was turbulent and bloody; that of Mary, furious, and such as had brought us into subjection to the most powerful, proud, and cruel nation at that time in the world, if God had not wonderfully protected us. Nay, Edward VI. and Queen Elizabeth, notwithstanding the natural excellency of their dispositions, and their knowledge of the truth in matters of religion, were forced by that which men call 'jealousy of state' to foul their hands so often with illustrious blood, that if their reigns deserve to be accounted amongst the most gentle of monarchies, they were more heavy than the government of any commonwealth in time of peace; and yet their lives were never secure against such as conspired against them upon the account of title."

purposes, till it sometimes becomes too strong for their direction. Defeat tarnishes the glory of a warlike people, and must be wiped off by victory. This was once the principle of private life. If one of a family or clan was murdered, it was necessary to retaliate, and obliterate the stain by another murder: but now the murderer only is disgraced, and imitation but involves in similar disgrace. Is this case too strong for knowledge and Christianity?

4. *Wars of religion.* The most absurd and impious of all. Men have been in arms for idolatry and theism, the Turkish faith and the (nominally) Christian faith, the Catholic religion and the Protestant religion, and, in the last war, for all sorts of religion against all sorts of infidelity. Now, to put down all this imposture, hypocrisy, and blasphemy, it is only necessary that men should go from priests and statesmen to the New Testament to learn Christianity: they will soon find that it may be suffered for, but cannot be fought for. They will read of only one sword drawn in its defence,—and then Christ healed the wounded person, and rebuked Peter with, "they that use the sword shall perish by the sword."

The opinion of the public in all countries must become more enlightened, and with that enlightenment wars will become more rare and less bloody, till they gradually cease. Armies cannot be raised, or paid, in defiance of opinion. Would it be possible, in this country, to raise a corps of fifty thousand assassins? With all the ignorance and vice that exist, hired assassination has no existence here. It still exists in Italy, and did flourish there. Opinion makes the impossibility. Were the gospel generally understood, opinion would present as insuperable a barrier to raising fifty thousand, or one thousand, hired soldiers. Peace, then, follows in the train of improvement.

> "War is a game which, were their subjects wise,
> Kings could not play at;"

and wisdom is their destined portion.

The Slave Trade was abolished by the voice of humanity alone. Numbers were interested in its continuance, but nobody had any thing to gain by its cessation. If the evils of war were generally known and contemplated, surely they would not produce feebler horror at its enormities, conviction of its guilt, or wishes and efforts for its abolition, than prevailed on that subject. It is an immense advantage that, when once the subject is properly understood, the pleadings of interest will join with those of humanity, prudence coöperate with conscience, and true policy second the views of benevolence and religion. To love peace, nations have only to learn their real interests.

It is not to be imagined that violent exertions, sudden changes, or acts of legislation, will serve this great cause: they would only retard its success. Nor is it benefited by the strenuous assertion of abstract principles. That any nation should proclaim to the world that its differences shall be hereafter settled by negotiation or mediation, and not by arms, is not to be expected, and probably not to be desired. All that the friends of peace can do, or ought to attempt, is, on proper occasions, to state their opinions, and constantly to diffuse information. Europe is becoming one great public. A distaste for war, a disposition to examine more rigidly into its causes and effects, and a general preference of other modes of deciding quarrels, will gradually and contemporaneously spring up and advance in all countries. Sovereigns, statesmen, generals, and also those classes of the community whose private interests are served at the expense of the public good, may be the last to partake of this improved feeling; but long before it reaches their hearts, it will have sufficient influence to control their measures. Religion, so often in its corrupted state the occasion of discord and bloodshed, will attain its purity and power, and bring on the universal reign of the Prince of Peace. Christianity is incompatible with war, and Christianity is both designed and destined to extend to all nations. I do not see how the obvious inference from the pacific tendency of Christianity, and its unbounded prevalence, can be eluded. But if it could, our hopes would be unshaken; for on this particular result from its progress the prophets have bestowed their richest imagery, nor does it seem easy to reconcile the notion that mankind shall always be subject to war, with belief in, or fair interpretation of, the Jewish and Christian scriptures. We gladly turn from it to prophecies such as these: "I will break the bow, and the sword, and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely. And I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy: and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God" (Hosea ii. 18, 23). "In the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more; but they shall sit every man under his vine, and under his fig-tree, and none shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of Hosts hath spoken it" (Micah iv. 1-4). "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp; and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isaiah xi. 6-9). The prediction of Isaiah, from which the text is taken, closely corresponds with that of Micah; and these, with the rest, agree in asserting the diffusion of religious knowledge as the means, and the abolition of war as the result. Here, then, the argument rests on the authority of scripture, of inspiration, of God. The general prospects of human improvement, to which your attention is next to be directed, are irradiated with light from heaven. The time *shall* come, when ambition, avarice, and false glory shall no more lead forth their victims to merciless carnage; nor enmities, jealousies, and oppressions pour their vials of anguish on the world. The voice of Christian hope tells of past triumphs and future glories, speaking bliss to the inmost soul. We can exult in our nature and our destiny. We can look around on the earth, shake off the miserable associations of crime and misery, and trace on all things lines of benevolence and joy. The gladdening result which we anticipate is promised by the words of unerring prophecy, and shall be realised by the operations of an eternal and omnipotent Providence. The youth shall enter on a brighter world than his forefathers knew, and wonder at the blood-stained tale of ancient days; while hoary age shall bow in holy resignation to the grave, exchanging earth for heaven but as a transition from glory to glory, and exclaiming in devout gratitude, as memory reverts to the troublous scenes of childhood, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

Appendix to Lecture VI.

The chapter on War and Military Establishments, in Paley's *Moral Philosophy*, is written in the same spirit as those on Crimes and Punishments, and on Establishments and Toleration; and excites the same painful and humbling emotions. It is impossible not to wish that they had been written by any body else, or not written at all. Some observations on this chapter may usefully be introduced here, by way of proof, or illustration, of parts of the Lecture on War.

"Because the Christian scriptures describe wars as what they are, as crimes or judgments, some have been led to believe that it is unlawful for a Christian to bear arms."

The inference does not appear very unreasonable. If wars be crimes, a Christian should keep himself unstained with the guilt, though enjoined by authority and participated in by numbers. If they be considered as judgments, it should be remembered that he who goes about to execute a divine judgment should be able to produce a divine commission. The chastisement of the wicked is frequently assigned by Providence to others as wicked, and whose very depravity qualifies them for the task, for which better men are unfitted by their benevolence.

It might be supposed from the expression, "*Some* have been led to believe," that the lawfulness of the military profession had only been denied by a few speculative or enthusiastic individuals. The fact is, as will be shown presently, that it was condemned by the almost unanimous voice of the whole Christian Church for two or three centuries.

"But it should be remembered, that it may be necessary for individuals to unite their force, and for this end to resign themselves to the direction of a common will; and yet, it may be true that that will is often actuated by criminal motives, and often determined to destructive purposes."

What is this common will, to the guidance of which it may be supposed necessary for individuals unconditionally to commit their powers? The argument requires us to understand by it the will of governments, which we will suppose to coincide with that of the majority of the community. Whenever that will is determined to vicious purposes, Christian individuals are certainly forbidden to resign themselves to its direction, although they may forfeit its protection and become obnoxious to its vengeance. They must obey God rather than man. No advantage to be derived from union can compensate for doing or assisting voluntarily in that which is morally wrong. The argument for submission is valid for all violations of the divine law, or for none. If it justifies a soldier in drawing his sword in what he deems an unjust cause, it will also justify him in perpetrating any atrocity which his superiors may command. Bands of robbers are the only societies united on such a principle.

"Hence, although the origin of wars be ascribed in scripture to the operation of lawless and malignant passion, and though war itself be enumerated among the sorest calamities with which a land can be visited, the profession of a soldier is nowhere forbidden or condemned."

Dr. Paley here refers to James iv. 1. The apostle's condemnation of war is addressed either to rulers or to subjects. If to the former, it should operate as a prohibition; if, as is most probable, to the latter, why should they be told that war was the result of lawless and malignant passions, unless to intimate that it was their duty not to aid in carrying into effect the dictates of such passions? For not expressly forbidding, especially in writings or public speeches, the military profession, there might be very sufficient reasons, without supposing it compatible with Christianity. Slavery has been nearly, and polygamy totally abolished, without any direct prohibition.* Christianity does not enjoin or recognise the essential virtues of the military character. It magnifies the passive courage of the martyr; but the active valour of the hero has no place in its catalogue of virtues;† nor does it ever enjoin the blind and prompt submission so necessary to constitute a good soldier. In the epistles we have ample statements of the duties of husbands, wives, parents, children, masters, servants, subjects; but where shall we find the duties of a soldier? And why do we not find them, if there were soldiers in Christian Churches? Continual injunctions to love our enemies, to forgive injuries, not to retaliate, &c.,

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* That Christianity would surely induce its converts to relinquish the profession of hired soldiers, and yet that it contains no explicit prohibition of that profession, is not more to be wondered at than that without a single prohibition (except in the case of bishops, 1 Tim. iii. 2), it should have abolished polygamy. The result was perhaps more valuable when produced by the individual, unprompted perception of the incompatibility. It is also possible that there might be some indulgence shown to those who were already in bondage; at least, a modern historian is of opinion, how correctly the reader must judge, that such toleration, in the latter case, would have aided a proselyting attempt made some years ago in Jamaica:

"In the course of an attempt to convert the Maroons to Christianity, polygamy was considered, and the Maroon told that, as a Christian, he could not have more than one wife. Having been attached to two for some time, and having children by both, 'Top, Massa Governor,' said he, 'top lilly bit; you say me mus forsake my wife.' 'Only one of them.' 'Which dat one? Jesus Christ say so? Gar A'mighty say so? No, no, massa; Gar A'mighty good; he no tell somebody he mus forsake him wife and children. Somebody no wicked for forsake him wife! No, massa, dis here talk no do for me'" (DALLAS's *History of the Maroons*, vol. i. p. 113).

It was with an ill grace that this requisition was made of the Maroons, while such an example was before their eyes as the same author has described:

"The white people on estates have as many sable wives as they please, and change them as often as they please; and there are few properties in the West Indies on which families of mulattoes have not been left by each succeeding overseer and bookkeeper. A father parts for life with his child, whom in its very birth he consigns to slavery, with as much indifference as with his old shoes" (*Ibid*, vol. i. p. 127).

† "Valour, or active courage, is, for the most part, constitutional, and therefore can have no more claim to moral merit, than wit, beauty, health, strength, or any other endowment of the mind or body; and so far is it from producing any salutary effects by introducing peace, order, or happiness into society, that it is the usual perpetrator of all the violences which, from retaliated injuries, distract the world with bloodshed and devastation. It is the engine by which

the strong are enabled to plunder the weak, the proud to trample upon the humble, and the guilty to oppress the innocent; it is the chief instrument which ambition employs in her unjust pursuits of wealth and power, and is, therefore, so much extolled by her votaries; it was, indeed, congenial with the religion of Pagans, whose gods were, for the most part, made out of deceased heroes, exalted to heaven as a reward for the mischiefs which they had perpetrated upon earth; and therefore, with them, this was the first of virtues, and had even engrossed that denomination to itself; but whatever merit it may have assumed among Pagans, with Christians it can pretend to none, and few or none are the occasions in which they are permitted to exert it. They are so far from being allowed to inflict evil, that they are forbidden even to resist it; they are so far from being encouraged to revenge injuries, that one of their first duties is to forgive them; so far from being incited to destroy their enemies, that they are commanded to love them, and to serve them to the utmost of their power. If Christian nations, therefore, were nations of Christians, all war would be impossible and unknown amongst them, and valour could be of neither use nor estimation, and therefore could never have a place in the catalogue of Christian virtues, being irreconcilable with all its precepts. I object not to the praise and honours bestowed on the valiant; they are the least tribute which can be paid them by those who enjoy safety and affluence by the intervention of their dangers and sufferings; I assert only that active courage can never be a Christian virtue, because a Christian can have nothing to do with it. Passive courage is, indeed, frequently and properly inculcated by this meek and suffering religion, under the titles of patience and resignation; a real and substantial virtue this, and a direct contrast to the former: for passive courage arises from the noblest dispositions of the human mind, from a contempt of misfortunes, pain, and death, and a confidence in the protection of the Almighty; active, from the meanest,—from passion, vanity, and self-dependence: passive courage is derived from a zeal for truth, and a perseverance in duty; active is the offspring of pride and revenge, and the parent of cruelty and injustice; in short, passive courage is the resolution of a philosopher; active, the ferocity of a savage. Nor is this more incompatible with the precepts than with the object of this religion, which is the attainment of the kingdom of heaven; for valour is not that sort of violence by which that kingdom is to be taken; nor are the turbulent spirits of heroes and conquerors admissible into those regions of peace, subordination, and tranquillity" (SOAME JENYNS *On the Internal Evidence of Christianity*, prop. 3).

are tantamount to the prohibition of a profession which appeals to very opposite principles. Besides, as "the important transactions of peace and war were prepared or concluded by solemn sacrifices, in which the magistrate, the senator, and the soldier were obliged to preside or to participate"—as even the standards were objects of worship—the inconsistency of Christians' engaging in idolatrous rites would supersede the necessity of issuing direct prohibitions, which would only have increased the odium under which its professors laboured.

"When the soldiers demanded of John the Baptist what they should do, he said unto them, 'Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely, and be content with your wages.' In which answer we do not find that, in order to prepare themselves for the reception of the kingdom of God, it was required of soldiers to relinquish their profession, but only that they should beware of the vices of which that profession was accused. The precept which follows, 'Be content with your wages,' supposed them to continue in their situation."

To this a reply may be borrowed from Barclay (*Apology*, prop. 15, sect. 15): "The question is not concerning John's doctrine, but Christ's, whose disciples we are, not John's; for Christ, and not John, is that prophet whom we all ought to hear. But what was John s answer, that we may see if it can justify the soldiers of this time? Consider, then, what he dischargeth to soldiers, viz. not to use violence or deceit against any; which being removed, let any one tell how soldiers can war. For are not craft, violence, and injustice three properties of war, and the natural consequences of battles?"

"It was of a Roman centurion that Christ pronounced that memorable eulogy, 'I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.'"

The Jews generally besought Christ to touch them, that they might be healed. The centurion first expressed a conviction of his ability to work a miracle on a person at a distance. Our Lord's commendation of the centurion's faith by no means implies that he was engaged in no pursuit or profession which the clearer light and milder spirit of Christianity would induce him to relinquish.

"The first Gentile convert who was received into the

Christian Church, and to whom the gospel was imparted by the immediate and especial direction of heaven, held the same station; and in the history of this transaction we discover not the smallest intimation that Cornelius, upon becoming a Christian, quitted the service of the Roman legion; that his profession was objected to, or his continuance in it considered as in any wise inconsistent with his new character."

If the narrative had begun, instead of ending, with the admission of Cornelius into the Christian Church, there would have been some force in this observation. As it leads us not a step further than his conversion and baptism, there is none. Connecting this want of evidence in the historical part of the New Testament with the total omission of moral precepts addressed to soldiers in the epistles, and with the fact that the early Christians frequently, if not universally, renounced the military profession, we cannot but form a very different conclusion from that which our author has deduced from the silence of the historian. Here closes his feeble and meagre array of evidence to prove the compatibility of the military profession with Christianity.

The wars of the Jews are passed over in silence, and properly, because they are quite inapplicable as an example, though they have sometimes been forced into the discussion. If it be lawful for Christians to make war because the Jews did, it must also be lawful to make war as they did. This is happily impossible. The power that should attempt to repeat the frightful scenes of the conquest of Canaan would soon be blotted out of the map of the world by a universal combination of civilised states. Their example proves too much, or nothing. It justifies massacre, or it does not justify war. Besides, their battles were fought by an armed nation, for a national object, and not by a hired military under arbitrary control: and the will, to the direction of which they resigned themselves, is recorded to have been the will of God, miraculously expressed. If it be said that the Deity would not command what was morally wrong, the objector is referred to the command for Abraham to sacrifice his son; and if this does not satisfy him, he may, if he so please, consult Dr. Geddes.

Passing over Dr. Paley's statement of the difficulty of applying the principles of morality to the affairs of states, his supposed cases in which the faith of treaties may be violated, and his remarks on that pliable code called the law of nations, we come to his considerations on the causes and conduct of wars. There can be no hesitation about admitting that "the family alliances, the personal friendships, or the personal quarrels of princes; the internal disputes which are carried on in other nations; the justice of other wars; the extension of territory or of trade; the misfortunes or accidental weakness of a neighbouring or rival nation,"—are "*insufficient* causes or *unjustifiable* motives of war." It is equally certain and deplorable, that these are the most usual sources of that dreadful calamity, and that they have caused the sacrifice of the lives of millions, and of the well-being and prospects of improvement of millions more. Great, indeed, and joyful would be the victory gained for mankind, could means be devised for averting in future their pestiferous operation.

"The *justifying* causes of war are, deliberate invasions of right, and the necessity of maintaining such a balance of power amongst neighbouring nations as that no single state or confederacy of states be strong enough to overwhelm the rest. The objects of just war are precaution, defence, or reparation. In a larger sense, every just war is a *defensive* war, inasmuch as every just war supposes an injury perpetrated, attempted, or feared."

What a text is here!

War is justified by "deliberate invasions of right." Of what right? of whose right? and who being judge? We need not look far back in history to meet with ample proof of the inexpediency, and consequently of the wickedness and folly, of asserting rights by war, whether they be rights of sovereign, subject, or parliament.

In 1715 and 1745, Charles Stuart appealed to arms against what he deemed the "deliberate invasion of right" by the house of Hanover, in withholding from his father the British crown. The result was, that, after a considerable effusion of blood in the field and on the scaffold, the hopes of his family sank for ever.

In 1739, war was declared by this country against Spain, on account of "deliberate invasions of the right" of British subjects to navigate the American seas without being subject to search. A war with France was soon added to that with Spain, and when at length peace was concluded, in 1748, all conquests were restored, the original cause of hostility was not even mentioned, and all the fruits of the contest were "a dreadful expense of blood and treasure, disgrace upon disgrace, an additional load of grievous impositions, and the national debt accumulated to" what Smollett calls "the enormous sum of eighty millions sterling."

The Americans deliberately invaded "the right" of the British parliament to tax them; enforcing this right involved the country in a bloody conflict,—in a war with Spain, France, and Holland,—in a debt of more than one hundred and ten millions sterling; lost us the colonies altogether, and excited in them a hostile spirit fraught with evils, which have been felt ever since and will long be felt.

Had the belligerent party in each of these cases submitted his or their claims to the decision of any impartial, or even any hostile, court, or man, or body of men, could the award have possibly been so unfavourable as the event of the contest proved? But it may be said, they were the aggressors. Not, perhaps, in the second case; but, be it so. They were still more wrong in waging war. And when "invasions of right" are assigned as a justifying cause of war, "right," in the estimation of the attacker, not in that of the attacked, or of a third party, is of course understood. It is plain, therefore, that all "invasions of right," even what are impartially and correctly so called, are not "justifying causes of war;" whether *any* are, shall be considered presently.

The other vindication is "the necessity of preserving such a balance of power amongst neighbouring nations as that no single state, or confederacy of states, be strong enough to overwhelm the rest."

That is to say, It is just to attack and desolate a neighbouring country, because its inhabitants are more prosperous, and consequently becoming more powerful, than we are. O Christian! Christian! when you forget the principles of your Master, how easily may an infidel put you down! Montesquieu has advanced the same position (*De l'Esprit des Loix,* liv. x. ch. ii.), which is thus commented on by Voltaire:

"Voici ce que dit Montesquieu.

"'Entre les sociétés le droit de la défense naturelle entraîne quelquefois la nécessité d'ataquer, lorsqu'un peuple voit qu'une plus longue paix en mettrait un autre en état de le détruire, et que l'ataque est dans ce moment le seul moyen d'empêcher cette destruction.'

"Comment l'ataque en pleine paix peut-elle être le seul moyen d'empêcher cette destruction? Il faut donc que vous soyez sûr que ce voisin vous détruira s'il devient puissant. Pour en être sûr, il faut qu'il ait fait déjà des préparatifs de votre perte. En ce cas c'est lui qui commence la guerre, ce n'est pas vous; votre supposition est fausse et contradictoire. S'il y eut jamais une guerre évidemment injuste, c'est celle que vous proposez; c'est d'aller tuer votre prochain, de peur que votre prochain (qui ne vous ataque pas) ne soit en état de vous ataquer.

"C'est-à-dire, qu'il faut que vous hazardiez de ruiner le pays dans l'espérance de ruiner sans raison celui d'un autre. Cela n'est assurément ni honnête, ni utile, car on n'est jamais sûr du succès; vous le savez bien.

"Si votre voisin devient trop puissant pendant la paix, qui vous empêche de vous rendre puissant comme lui? S'il a fait des alliances, faites-en de votre côté. Si ayant moins de religieux, il en a plus de manufacturiers et de soldats, imitez-le dans cette sage économie. S'il exerce mieux ses matelots, exercez les votres; tout cela est très juste. Mais d'exposer votre peuple à la plus horrible misère, dans l'idée si souvent chimérique d'accabler votre cher frère le sérénissime prince limitrophe! Ce n'était pas à un président honoraire d'une compagnie pacifique à vous donner un tel conseil."*

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* The conclusion of Montesquieu's chapter on War ought in justice to be subjoined:

"Le droit de la guerre dérive donc de la nécessité et du juste rigide. Si ceux qui dirigent la conscience ou les conseils des princes ne se tiennent pas là, tout est perdu: et lorsqu'on se fondera sur des principes arbitraires de gloire, de bienséance, d'utilité, des flots de sang inonderont la terre.

"Que l'on ne parle pas surtout de la gloire du prince; sa gloire seroit son orgueil; c'est une passion et non pas un droit légitime.

"Il est vrai que la réputation de sa puissance pourroit augmenter les forces de son Etat: *mais la réputation de sa justice les augmenteroit tout de même.*"

The passage quoted from Voltaire commences with a sneer at

Such advice is not more becoming in a professor of moral philosophy and archdeacon of a Christian Church. History is full of the mischiefs and sufferings which have accrued to this country by her attempts to "*trim the balance of Europe*;" but where shall we find the record of the good which has resulted either to herself or other nations? What might not have been accomplished by the appropriation of half the means thus wasted to the purposes of internal strength and prosperity?

"The objects of just war are, precaution, defence, or reparation."

It would not be thought a very just "precaution,"

Machiavel, very unworthy of the author; and for the omission of which the reader will be fully compensated, if his taste at all accord with mine, by a comparative sketch of Machiavel and Montesquieu, taken from one of the very few works of temporary politics which are so written as to be permanently interesting:

"Machiavel, born and bred in tumultuous and profligate times, and occupied in the affairs of a distempered republic, caught his first principles of politics from what he *saw*. Montesquieu, more happy in his birth and fortune, enjoying an early leisure, in a quiet and well-regulated monarchy, drew his first principles of politics from what he *read*. Yet neither was the first given up to mere personal observation, nor the last to mere study; in the progress of life, Machiavel applied himself to books, and Montesquieu to men; yet, as was natural, their first habits prevailed, and gave to each his distinct and peculiar character. Hence, though both saw the internal and secret springs of government (which, in my opinion, no writer but these two did ever fully comprehend or penetrate), yet they saw them by different lights, and through different mediums. Machiavel's leading guide was fact; Montesquieu's was philosophy. In consequence of this, *simplicity* forms the character of the one, *refinement* of the other. The speculative Frenchman forms a fine system, to the completion of which he sometimes tortures both argument and fact; the plain and downright Florentine builds on facts, independent of all system. The polite and disinterested Sage is warm in the praise of honesty; the active and penetrating Secretary, above praise or censure, gives a bold and striking picture of the ways of men. Hence, while the first gains every heart by the force of moral sympathy, the latter hath been falsely detested as the enemy of virtue and mankind. Machiavel is negligent, yet pure and strong, scorning the minuter graces of composition; Montesquieu is elegant, yet nervous; and to the acuteness of the philosopher adds the fire of the poet. Both were the friends of freedom and of man; both superior to the genius of their time and country; both truly great: the Florentine severe and great; the Frenchman great and amiable" (*Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times*, by Dr. John Brown, 1757).

though undoubtedly it would be an effectual one, to hang a man of bad character because he was suspected of an inclination to become a housebreaker. An additional bolt, or guard, would be very reasonable in such a case. Attack, as a precaution against attack, is crime for the prevention of crime. It is incurring a certain to avoid a contingent evil; and when that certain evil is so immense and undefined as war must always be, it becomes difficult, if not impossible, to assign the mischief against which it is wise and right to have recourse to such a precaution. And what sort of "reparation" has war ever afforded? None, consistent with justice, in any instance which I can recollect. The injury is usually offered by one party, the reparation exacted from another, and that reparation is obtained and overbalanced by the labours and sufferings of a third. A King of England seizes on some provinces subject to the King of France: here is the injury. The King of France recovers the dominion of those provinces: this is reparation. But this reparation is procured by a long series of bloody wars between the two nations, who had no part in the quarrel, and nothing to gain or lose by its decision, and who are alternately attacked at the command of either monarch, merely because they have the misfortune to be subject to his rival; and as much treasure is expended in the contest as might have purchased the two countries, and as many persons are destroyed as might have peopled them. Rarely does it happen that a war of reparation, even though successful, is not infinitely worse than any injury.

But, defence—and "in a *larger* sense, every just war is a defensive war, inasmuch as every just war supposes an injury perpetrated, attempted, or feared."

"It is common," observes a writer already quoted, "to make a distinction between offensive and defensive war. No one vindicates the first, and almost every one the latter. Now I do imagine that if the question—What is defensive war?—could be fairly and satisfactorily settled, it would at once put an end to all controversy upon the practicability of abolishing war. Yet here lies the difficulty: what is it we are called upon to defend? Sometimes our honour is attacked, or threatened, or may be attacked. Sometimes there is an interference with our trade, and our commerce is interrupted or loaded with difficulties; sometimes our peculiar political views are thwarted or contradicted. According to men's feelings and their peculiar interest, a war is or is not considered by them as purely defensive. Then, again, the affairs of nations are so complicated, that what appears to some persons as immediately and directly offensive war, may in the views of others be regarded as remotely and ultimately defensive. Yet, even in the strictest defensive wars, how little is really defended which can be protected by the sword! When William invaded England from Normandy, in consequence of the refusal of the English to recognise his title to the succession, it is very easy to imagine that Harold said a number of fine things to the tools of his ambition, and William as many to his. Yet it is not easy, perhaps, to say how much the real agents gained by their victory, nor to calculate under what disadvantage each party would have laboured, had they wisely refused to draw a sword in the quarrel. It is difficult to say what, in such circumstances, would have been the wisest course for the active mass to pursue. Fighting on either part was not the best; for look at the result: on either side a tremendous slaughter, and the remnant of the victorious party, the great multitude, quite as much in slavery as before. I may be asked here if I recommend unqualified and tame submission to an invader? Certainly not; but here was a different question: the English were not then, as they now are, a free people; they fought against one tyrant for the sake of another, and gave a specimen how much men may be deceived by specious names. The English did not fight for any thing truly valuable. I do think it may be proved, that even in this case they could have done better for themselves by refusing to fight, and by having recourse to negotiation. This invasion of William seems almost an extreme case, yet even he might make something of a plea in his favour; he might assert that his right ought not to be tamely yielded to a usurper, and that the English nation were opposing his just claims, and, therefore, that his loyal subjects were bound to resist rebels to his authority" (SCARGILL's *Essays on various Subjects*, pp. 164-167).

Defensive war is a solecism. The terms ought never to have been combined. They mean, if any thing, defensive offence. To resistance—in extreme cases, armed resistance—

of attacks upon liberty or life, no valid objection can be urged. Man has a natural right, unrepealed by revelation, to repel force by force. To call this war, is confounding two very different things under the same name. A license to attack is essential to war. It authorises violence towards all belonging to the same nation as the aggressors. When a free country is invaded, let every citizen arm and fight till the invaders be repelled. But to plunder a merchant of his property, to lay a town in ashes, to conquer an island, because that merchant, town, or island, has a nominal and involuntary connection with the invaders, is to become aggressors equally with them, and to avenge the wrongs of the guilty on the heads of the innocent. What can be more absurd and unjust than for a French army to ravage India, because an English army had desolated France? Injustice cannot sanctify injustice, nor can one crime be the justification of another. The readiest means of repelling an assault upon one unoffending party may seem to be their assaulting another unoffending party; but the readiest means of compassing a lawful object is very often not lawful in itself. If to "do evil that good may come" is iniquitous in one man, it cannot be right in millions of men combined in national union.

Paley recovers his natural tone, and writes like what he really was at heart, the friend of man, when he proceeds to enforce on the attention of rulers "two lessons of rational and sober policy:" first, "to place their glory and their emulation, not in extent of territory, but in raising the greatest quantity of happiness out of a given territory; and, secondly, never to pursue national *honour* as distinct from national *interest.*" To his concession, that it may be necessary to assert the honour of a nation by war, the remarks of Godwin on the same subject may be satisfactorily opposed: "True honour is to be found only in integrity and justice. It has been doubted how far a view to reputation ought, in matters of inferior moment, to be permitted to influence the conduct of individuals; but let the case of individuals be decided as it may, reputation considered as a separate motive in the instance of nations can perhaps never be justifiable. In individuals, it seems as if I might, consistently with the utmost real integrity, be so misconstrued as to render my efforts at usefulness almost necessarily abortive. But this reason does not apply to the case of nations. Their real story cannot easily be suppressed. Usefulness and public spirit, in relation to them, chiefly belong to the transactions of their members among themselves; and their influence in the transactions of neighbouring nations is a consideration evidently subordinate" (*Political Justice*, b. v. ch. xvi.). That the real story of nations cannot be suppressed, is an argument not only against reputation as a separate motive, which Paley also seems to condemn, but also against the assumption that national interest can ever require the hostile assertion of national honour.

"If the cause and end of war be justifiable, all the means that appear necessary to the end are justifiable also."

This is horrible; and it is extraordinary that the consequences of his principle did not lead Paley to question its validity, and operate as a *reductio ad absurdum*, or rather as a *reductio ad nefandum*. Every species of fraud and violence which can tend to weaken a rival nation is thus justified. The vindication includes many barbarities which the progress of information and of benevolent feeling has abolished; but which, after all, have as good an excuse as the practices which are still retained. Thus it is allowed that, "if it be lawful to kill an enemy at all, it seems lawful to do so by one mode of death as well as by another; by a dose of poison, as by the point of a sword; by the hand of an assassin, as by the attack of an army: for, if it be said that one species of assault leaves to an enemy the power of defending himself against it, and that the other does not, it may be answered, that we possess at least the same right to cut off an enemy's defence that we have to seek his destruction. In this manner might the question be debated, if there existed no rule or law of war upon the subject." And what are laws of war, but restrictions imposed on the furious passions of combatants by the increasing benevolence of mankind, which thus marks its advance, and will finally prevail? Public opinion is the only sanction of the laws of war, and is not always an effectual one. Every article of Paley's list of ultimate and gratuitous mischiefs to which the license of war does not extend, might be illustrated by instances which occurred in the late contest, and probably in every contest.

If war be unjustifiable, and armed resistance only allowable for the single and immediate object of repulsing an armed attack, the question concerning the military profession and standing armies is brought into a very narrow compass. They are much more adapted for attack and conquest than for defence, and are the swords but not the shields of nations.

Paley contends that a standing army is a "more effectual" and "a cheaper method of providing for the public safety than any other, because it adds more than any other to the common strength, and takes less from that which composes the wealth of a nation—its stock of productive industry."

Let the question of expense be fairly stated. Without hired soldiers, and only appealing to arms for defence, in the proper sense of the word, it may be necessary for a country "to call the reaper from the fields in harvest, or the ploughman in seed-time;" but there will not be a permanent class of wasteful and unproductive consumers; nothing will be lavished for purposes of aggression and conquest, by which, when most successful, whoever gains, the people are losers; and the infrequency of unprovoked invasion must be contrasted with continual wars and their entailed burdens and miseries.

That "nothing but a standing army can oppose a standing army, where the numbers on each side bear any moderate proportion to one another," may be true of quarrels in which the people have nothing at stake; but discipline and experience have repeatedly been found to be no match for that moral courage which springs from the conviction of justice, the love of liberty, and the preference of death to the relinquishment of what God has given to make life valuable. These principles gave the parliamentary troops such superiority in the contest with Charles I. "The battle of Naseby," observes Fletcher,* "will be a further illustration of this matter, which is generally thought to have been the deciding action of the late civil war. The number of forces was equal on both sides; nor was there

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* My well-informed readers, if with such these pages should be honoured, are doubtless acquainted with Andrew Fletcher; but I must just introduce him to my young friends. He was a Scotch gentleman, of large property, in the reign of Charles II., and having distinguished himself by his open and parliamentary opposition to the designs of James II., then Duke of York, was obliged to retire to Holland: and not appearing to a summons from the Privy Council, he was declared a traitor, and his estate confiscated. He joined in the unfortunate

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attempt made by the Duke of Monmouth, and afterwards came over with William III. at the Revolution. During that and the succeeding reign he distinguished himself in the Scotch parliament by the jealousy with which he watched the encroachments of the crown, and the firmness and boldness with which he advocated popular rights. He is truly described as "steady in his principles, of nice honour, with abundance of learning; brave as the sword he wears, and bold as a lion; a sure friend, and an irreconcilable enemy; would lose his life readily to serve his country, and would not do a base thing to save it. His thoughts are large as to religion, and could never be brought within the bounds of any particular sect. Nor will he be under the distinction of a Whig or Tory; saying, those names are used to cloak the knaves of both." "If ever a man proposes to serve and merit well of his country, let him place his courage, zeal, and constancy as a pattern before him; and think himself sufficiently applauded and rewarded if he obtain the character of being like *Andrew Fletcher, of Saltoun.*" (Vide Characters prefixed to his Works.)

Fletcher must be enrolled in the honourable fraternity of Utopians, having tried his hand at reforming the world in a *Conversation concerning a right Regulation of Governments for the common Good of Mankind.* He had himself been a military man, and during his banishment served several campaigns under the Duke of Lorrain: but a principal object of his scheme was the abolition of wars, which he proposed to accomplish by so modelling governments as to render them powerful in defence, but incapable or unfit to make conquests. His favourite idea was that of small, independent states in federal union. His political works contain, besides the *Conversation* referred to, two discourses on the affairs of Scotland, one on Spain, one on Government with relation to Militias, and several parliamentary speeches. All are characterised by powerful and philosophical reasoning, extensive information, sound patriotism, and nervous eloquence. Towards the close of Queen Anne's reign he introduced a bill into the Scotch parliament the object of which was, to provide effectual limitations of the royal prerogative before the declaration of her successor. The first clause of this bill is curious, as it couples with a limitation of the duration of parliaments, now advocated by many, a change in their mode of proceeding, which, though sometimes pleaded for as to electors, has not been thought of by any modern reformer, as far as I know, for the members themselves. The proposed enactment was, "that elections shall be made at every Michaelmas head-court for a new parliament every year; to sit the first of November next following, and adjourn themselves from time to time till next Michaelmas; that they choose their own president, and that every thing shall be determined by *balloting*, in place of voting." The collector of the pieces in this volume pithily observes, "Mr. Fletcher never wrote for a party; and his writings, therefore, ought to last."

any advantage in the ground, or extraordinary accident that happened during the fight, which could be of considerable importance to either. In the army of the parliament, nine only of the officers had served abroad, and most of the soldiers were prentices drawn out of London but two months before. In the king's army there were above a thousand officers that had served in foreign parts: yet was that army routed and broken by those new-raised prentices; who were observed to be obedient to command, and brave in fight, not only in that action, but on all occasions during that active campaign; and though officers seem to stand in more need of experience than private soldiers, yet in that battle it was seen that the sobriety and principle of the officers on the one side prevailed over the experience of those on the other." Many similar instances may be found in history. And the force of native talent in uneducated and inexperienced officers, and of republican enthusiasm in raw troops, which so signally baffled the most accomplished generals and choicest veterans of Europe, at the commencement of the revolutionary war with France, will probably present itself to the minds of most of my readers.

There are few cases in which an invaded country, whose inhabitants possess any thing worth defending, may not bring into the field a great superiority of numbers. For this reason, Machiavel decides that "the prince, whose people are in a posture and provided for war, does wisely if he expects a potent and dangerous enemy at home, rather than invade him in his own country." He adduces, in illustration, the following examples amongst others: "The Athenians, whilst they kept themselves upon the defensive part, and expected their enemies at home, were always victorious; but when they began to make war at a distance, and send armies into Sicily, they lost their liberty and every thing else. I do not remember any foreign expedition by the Romans for the conquest of any province, in which their army exceeded the number of 50,000. But upon the invasion of the Gauls, after the first Punic war, they brought 118,000 men into the field for their defence. The Switzers may without much difficulty be overpowered abroad, because they seldom march above 30,000 or 40,000 strong; but to attack and beat them at home is much more difficult, where they can bring into the field 100,000 and more" (*Discourses on Livy*, b. ii. ch. xii.).

An armed people's being "utterly incapable of carrying their operations into a foreign country" is not, therefore, so decided a disadvantage as Paley seems to suppose. Indeed, where should a man fight for his country but in his country? Have we not had enough of English fighting for their country in India, French in Egypt, Italians in Russia, and Russians in France? How much of farce there is in the bloodiest tragedies! But *Colonies?* Very true; on the principles I have advocated, they could be neither conquered, governed, nor defended; and must learn to govern and defend themselves, or associate with their neighbours. Nor would this be the greatest evil imaginable. Britain has been abundantly wealthier by the loss of that dominion over America which she struggled so sturdily to retain. And according to one of our ablest political economists (Dr. Purves), "this affords a most useful lesson to Spain. Were her governors acquainted with the real principles of population and of the production of wealth, and had they the courage to act upon them, they would at once declare their South-American colonies independent, and cultivate a new connection with them as commercial allies."

Fletcher of Saltoun, in his masterly *Discourse of Government with relation to Militias,* maintains that, unless all the people be accustomed to the use of arms, freedom cannot exist; and Paley contends, that if they be so accustomed, no government can stand: Fletcher, that if the power of the sword be intrusted to the sovereign, nothing of liberty can remain but the form; and Paley, that if it be not intrusted to him, nothing of royalty would be left but the name and expense. On these topics I shall not enter, except just to remark, that wars for liberty have very often ended miserably. Wars require armies, and armies lead to despotism. When a people understand freedom, and are ripe for its enjoyment, they can generally discover a better and surer road to its attainment than by fighting for it; while insurgent slaves only prepare for themselves a heavier yoke. There is much truth in an expression, to which something of ridicule is now attached, that "for a nation to be free, it is sufficient that she wills it." The peaceable, enlightened, persevering pursuit of just rights must be successful. There may be martyrdom in its course, but there cannot be slavery at its termination. An appeal to the sword commonly either strengthens an old despotism or produces a new one.

The affinity between standing armies and despotism is noticed by Paley at the conclusion of the chapter on which these remarks are hazarded; but he has altogether passed over the demoralising consequences of making war a profession and a trade, except in the merely incidental remark, that "the profession of a soldier almost always unfits men for the business of regular occupations." By other writers on the subject they have been made more prominent. Fletcher says of mercenary troops, "Most men that enter into those armies, whether officers or soldiers, as if they were obliged to show themselves new creatures, and perfectly regenerate, if before they were modest or sober, immediately turn themselves to all manner of debauchery and wickedness, committing all kinds of injustice and barbarity against poor and defenceless people." Machiavel has a remarkable condemnation of the military profession: "War being a profession by which men cannot live honourably at all times, it is not to be taken up as a trade, unless it be by a commonwealth or a kingdom; and if they be well constituted, they will neither of them suffer any of their citizens or subjects, or any other good man, to make it his business; for he will never be thought a good man who takes upon him an employment by which, if he would reap any profit at any time, he is obliged to be false and rapacious and cruel, and to entertain several other qualities that are not consistent in a good man; nor can any man, great or small, who makes war his profession, be otherwise than vicious;—have you not a proverb which confirms what I say, and tells us that 'War makes thieves, and peace brings them to the gallows'?" (*Art of War*, c. ii.) He then adduces the example of Rome, which "whilst it was well governed (which was till the time of the Gracchi) had never any soldier who made it his profession to be so, by which means few of them were dissolute." They had afterwards; and then came the corruption of their manners and the extinction of their liberties.

What man can escape untainted from long familiarity with stratagem, falsehood, bloodshed, and plunder! Melancholy proof might be given of their brutalising influence upon men of education, rank, and humanity; what then must it be upon the ignorant, young, necessitous, and worthless, who fill the ranks of armies? There are, doubtless, in the army many men of excellent character, extensive benevolence, and real piety: I have known such. I am sorry that it should be so; because the strict consistency of Christians on the subject of war is the first step towards its abolition.

Long, very long, will it probably be before the world arrives at a consummation so devoutly to be wished; and a firm trust in the truth of prophecy and the omnipotence of Providence can alone preserve us from doubting or despairing of its arrival. Opposing interests, false notions of glory, the turbulence of ambition, and a thousand formidable obstacles, preclude all hope of its speedy approach. Meanwhile there is some gratification in observing, that the testimony borne against this evil has been especially connected with the purer forms of religion, and will therefore gather strength in proportion to the predicted revival and diffusion of genuine Christianity.

Neither Jews nor Christians could serve in the Roman legions without incurring the guilt of idolatry. The frequent sacrifices at which all were bound to assist, the homage paid to the standards, the military oath, which was renewed every year,—all were idolatrous. Hence, before the time of Christ the Jews only acted as auxiliaries to the Romans, under their own officers; and they procured from Julius Cæsar an exemption from serving in the wars. But the objections of some of them were not only to idolatry, but to war itself. Philo says of the Esseans, "None among them can be found that manufacture darts, arrows, swords, breastplates, or even such weapons as might be converted to bad purposes in time of peace; much less do they engage in any of those arts which are useful in war." The Esseans generally became Christians (see Jones's *Ecclesiastical Researches*); and their pacific principles, sanctioned as they were by the language of Christ (Matt. v. 38, &c.), were adopted and adhered to generally by the Christians for upwards of two centuries, being only abandoned by the same gradation by which truth, simplicity, and purity were abandoned also. Of this there is satisfactory evidence.

Justin Martyr declares, "We fight not with our enemies;" ascribes war, without distinction, to the instigation of the devil; and considers the prophecy of Isaiah (ii. 4) as accomplished in its renunciation by the Christians of his day.

Irenæus gives the same literal interpretation of that prophecy, and expresses the same notion of its being then fulfilled: "Jam nesciunt pugnare."

Tatian intimates plainly his opinion concerning the unlawfulness of war, and contrasts soldiers and Christians as in all respects opposite.

Tertullian condemns serving in the army; but "in his time (the third century), if not before, there were some Christian soldiers, and it is hard to conceive how they could maintain their innocence in that station, and avoid such dissimulation and such practices as were scarcely allowable. It is to be supposed that the Christians kept out of the army as much as they could" (Jortin).

Clemens Alexandrinus allows that it might be lawful for a Christian to serve, if, when he was converted to Christianity, he was a soldier; and enjoins on such converts obedience to the *just* commands of their superiors.

These must have been comparatively rare instances, for afterwards Celsus charges the Christians with refusing to bear arms for the emperor, and tells them, that if all were of their opinion, the empire would soon be overrun by the barbarians. Origen, in replying, allows the truth of the accusation.

Cyprian says, "When a single murder is committed, it shall be deemed perhaps a crime; but that crime shall become a virtue when committed under the shelter of public authority: so that punishment is not rated by the measure of guilt, but the more enormous the size of wickedness is, so much greater is the chance of impunity."

Even in the legend of the "Thundering Legion," the Christians are represented as serving Antoninus not by their arms, but by their prayers.

In the fourth century, Lactantius declares expressly against Christians being in the army; and Epiphanius mentions a sect of heretics called στρατιώτικοι, or military (as there is now in America a sect of "fighting Quakers"), of whom nothing is known but the name, which is reasonably supposed to have been a term of reproach, fastened on them by other Christians, for their serving, or holding it lawful to serve, in the armies.

Tarachus, the martyr, says in his examination, "When I was a soldier, I was called Victor; *because I was a Christian*, I renounced the service."

Lardner remarks on a work ascribed to Archelaus, a bishop of Mesopotamia, apparently written in the fourth century, and whose author "speaks more like a Unitarian than a Catholic," that he seems to have condemned all war as unlawful; for, relating that some Roman soldiers, charmed with the piety and generosity of Marcellus, were induced to embrace the Christian religion, he says that "they immediately forsook the profession of arms."

The reader may find much interesting matter on this subject in Moyle's *Letters concerning the Thundering Legion*, who, after citing Athenagoras, Minucius Felix, Irenæus, Tatian, &c., observes, "All these authors do directly, or in consequence, deny the lawfulness of war; and not only represent it as their own private opinion, but as agreeable to the universal belief and practice of that age. And I do not see what can be reasonably opposed to the authority of every individual writer of the second century, who wrote near the age of Antoninus."

Through what has been aptly termed the millennium of the powers of darkness, those who were called Christians indulged plentifully in deeds of blood and desolation. Yet, even here sometimes a faint flash darts across the gloom. A synod held in England under William the Conqueror declared that those who fought only for hopes of a reward, ought to do penance as for murder; following, probably, the decision of St. Augustine: "Militare non est delictum, sed propter prædam militare peccatum est."

With the first symptoms of dissent from the corruptions of the Church of Rome was coupled a protest against the iniquity of war. The Paterines, or Gazari, the Puritans of Italy in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries, kept alive the cause of truth, liberty, and benevolence. Many of them were anti-Trinitarians; but they allowed great diversity of opinions, and held that a church had no power to frame any constitutions; that it was not right to take oaths; that the benefits of society belonged alike to all the members of it; that it was not lawful to bear arms, or to kill mankind.

To these succeeded other heralds of the Reformation, who, under the names of Waldenses, Albigenses, &c., were scattered over a great part of Europe, and of whom the following account is given by Robinson: "Authentic records in France assure us that a people of a certain description were driven from thence in the twelfth century. Bohemian records, of equal authenticity, inform us that some of the same description arrived in Bohemia at the same time, and settled near a hundred miles from Prague, at Satz and Lann, on the river Eger, just on the borders of the kingdom. Almost two hundred years after, another undoubted record of the same country mentions a people of the same description, some as burnt at Prague, and others as inhabiting the borders of the kingdom; and a hundred and fifty years after that, we find a people of the same description settled by connivance in the metropolis, and in several other parts of the kingdom. About one hundred and twenty years lower, we find a people in the same country, living under the protection of law on the estate of Prince Lichtenstein, exactly like all the former, and about thirty or forty thousand in number. The religious character of this people is so very different from that of all others, that the likeness is not easily mistaken. They had no priests, but taught one another. They had no private property, for they held all things jointly. They executed no offices, and neither exacted nor took oaths. *They bore no arms, and rather chose to suffer than resist wrong.* They held every thing called religion in the Church of Rome in abhorrence, and worshiped God only by adoring his perfections, and endeavouring to imitate his goodness. They thought Christianity wanted no comment, and they professed the belief of that by being baptised, and their love to Christ and one another by receiving the Lord's Supper. They aspired at neither wealth nor power, and their plan was industry. We have shown how highly probable it is that Bohemia afforded them work, wages, and a secure asylum, which was all they wanted. If these be facts, they are facts that do honour to human nature; they exhibit in the great picture of the world a few small figures in a background, unstained with the blood and unruffled with the disputes of their fellow-creatures. It was their wisdom in their times not to come forward to deliver apologies to the world, and creeds with flattering prefaces to princes; the turbulence of the crowd would have caused the still voice of reason not to be heard" (*Ecclesiastical Researches*, p. 527).

Some of this class, probably from Flanders or Germany, where they had obtained the name of Lollards, came to England, and their tenets on the subject of war were adopted by the great and venerable Wickliffe. "He seems," says Priestley, "to have thought it wrong to take away the life of man on any account, and that war was utterly unlawful, and much more war in the name of religion, such as the popes promoted during the great schism. 'When,' he said, 'will the proud priest of Rome grant indulgences to mankind to live in peace and charity, as he now does to fight and kill one another?'"

At the time of the Reformation, the leaders of the Polish Unitarians, both Arian and Socinian, ranged themselves on the side of humanity, declaring against both war and capital punishments, and objecting to fill the office of magistrate, on account of the oaths required, and because it might involve the necessity of bearing arms and shedding blood. "These notions of the morality of the gospel would not suffer the judge Niemoiovius, though a nobleman, to continue on the bench, and he resigned his office." There were some differences of opinion amongst them on these subjects; but while many held the unlawfulness of war altogether, none seemed to have conceded more than that arms might be resorted to in self-defence, according to the very strictest interpretation of that expression. Thus far the continental Socinians were generally agreed. Ruarus, of Amsterdam, alluding to the difficulty arising from the prevalence of wars and capital punishments, remarks, that it was harder for a Christian to fill the office of a magistrate, especially of a chief magistrate, than "for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Cheynell, the antagonist of Chillingworth, and one of the Westminster Assembly of Divines, deemed such principles not worthy of toleration. "Socinians are not to be suffered in any state, for they will not show any obedience or respect to magistrates; they say they have no power to punish heinous offenders in time of peace, nor have they power to defend themselves or the people in time of war. But especially they charge the magistrates to beware how they meddle with good honest heretics." He afterwards accuses both them and the Anabaptists of inconsistent conduct in the civil war. "It is commonly said that they (the Anabaptists) have lately taken up arms in rebellion against the king. I must confess, I have wondered often when I have heard of this daily complaint, because I know that an Anabaptist doth not think it lawful to be a cutler: he thinks no sword ought to be made, because he conceives it unlawful to use a sword. It is well known that the Anabaptists go to sea without any ordnance in their ships, that they travel without any sword by their side; but if there be any fighting Anabaptists in these days, I suppose the English Socinians have taught the English Anabaptists to deny those principles in practice which they maintain in dispute." Ascham (who was ambassador from the Commonwealth to Spain, and assassinated by some English royalists at Madrid), contending for the lawfulness of war against "Slichtingius and the rest of his (Socinian) tribe," speaks more honourably of his opponents. "Whilst all the Christian world is embroiled in war, and that the very state of mankind is nothing else but *status belli*, yet not a few perhaps of the best Christians find their consciences checked, as if they had an interdict from heaven, restraining them (even in the extremest necessities) from defending their persons and temporal rights by the effusion of human blood. They conceive such an exactness of Christian patience and charity is now required of us in regard of those excellent promises of reigning with Christ in heaven, that all sort of war fights now against him and his religion. This made an eminent statesman, pleading for toleration of religion in France, say, 'Qu'il valoit mieux avoir une paix où il y avoient deux religions, qu'une guerre où il n'y en avoit point'—that 'it was better to have a peace with two religions, than a war with none at all.' These Christians, of whom we now speak, assure themselves, that 'if they wallow in one another's blood here, they cannot afterwards tumble together in Abraham's bosom.'" For a very curious and interesting account of Cheynell's *Rise, Growth, and Danger of Socinianisme*, and Ascham's *Confusions and Revolutions of Governments*, from which these extracts are taken, see *Monthly Repository* for 1815, pp. 81, 431, &c.

Many of the continental Anabaptists showed no want of a disposition for turbulence and bloodshed; but the pacific principles of their founders were always cherished by others of the party, and have been preserved by their descendants, the Mennonites, or Unitarian Baptists, of Germany, Russia, and Holland.

We must not omit an honourable mention of others, who, though adopting the military profession, have held out against the common maxim that they had nothing to do with the justice of the cause for which their swords were drawn. Many of the Independents in Cromwell's army threw up their commissions rather than serve in the war which he commenced, in their opinion so wantonly, against Spain, by the seizure of Jamaica. Algernon Sidney argues this point very conclusively against Filmer: "His second instance concerning wars, in which he says, the subject is not to examine whether they are just or unjust, but must obey, is weak and frivolous, and very often false. Though God may be merciful to a soldier, who by the wickedness of a magistrate, whom he honestly trusts, is made a minister of injustice, it is nothing to this case. For if our author say true, that the word of a king can justify him in going against the command of God, he must do what is commanded, though he think it evil; the Christian soldiers under the Pagan emperors were obliged to destroy their brethren, and the best men in the world, for being so; such as now live under the Turk have the same obligation upon them of defending their master, and slaughtering those he reputes his enemies for adhering to Christianity; and the King of France may, when he pleases, arm one part of his Protestant subjects, to the destruction of another; which is a godly doctrine, and worthy our author's invention. But if this be so, I know not how the Israelites can be said to have sinned in following the examples of Jeroboam, Omri, Ahab, or other wicked kings. It is impertinent to say they were obliged to serve their kings in unjust wars, but not to serve idols; for though God be jealous of his glory, yet he forbids rapine and murder as well as idolatry. If there be a law that forbids the subject to examine the commands tending to the one, it cannot but enjoin obedience to the other. The same authoity which justifies murder, takes away the guilt of idolatry" (*Discourses concerning Government*, ch. iii. sect. 20).

Now arose the Quakers, whose profession of faith is too well expressed by Barclay not to be given in his own words:

"If to revenge ourselves, or to render injury, evil for evil, wound for wound, to take eye for eye, tooth for tooth; if to fight for outward and perishing things, to go a-warring one against another, whom we never saw, nor with whom we never had any contest, nor any thing to do; being, moreover, altogether ignorant of the cause of the war, but only that the magistrates of the nations foment quarrels one against another, the causes whereof are, for the most part, unknown to the soldiers that fight, as well as upon whose side the right or wrong is; and yet to be so furious and rage one against another, to destroy and spoil all, that this or the other worship may be received or abolished;—if to do this, and much more of this kind, be to fulfil the law of Christ, then are our adversaries indeed true Christians, and we miserable heretics, that suffer ourselves to be spoiled, taken, imprisoned, banished, beaten, and evilly intreated, without any resistance, placing our trust only in God, that he may defend us, and lead us by the way of the cross into his kingdom. But if it be otherwise, we shall certainly receive the reward which the Lord hath promised to those that cleave to him, and, in denying themselves, confide in him."

Three observations suggest themselves on this account of the principal classes of Christians by whom war has been condemned:

1. The Unitarian will, perhaps, not be sorry to remark, that a conviction of its criminality has generally been found in connection with those notions of doctrine which bear most affinity to his own, or with that religious liberty which usually precedes or accompanies their adoption.

2. The history of this aversion from war furnishes a presumption in favour of its being inseparable from pure Christianity. It appears strongest at the nearest period of which we can gain information to the apostolic age; it gradually wore out as religion became corrupt, until it was quite lost: as the New Testament was again studied, and made the rule of faith and practice, it reappeared; and it

was most powerful in those who, according to our opinions, were the most enlightened and consistent of all who aided in the great work of Reformation.

3. Whether recourse to arms be essentially unlawful, or allowable in some extreme cases, of rare occurrence; and whether the military profession should be altogether avoided by Christians, or only when they deem the cause unjust, or the means forbidden,—are differences comparatively of little moment, so long as there is a common and lively sense of the miseries and crimes which war produces. This feeling pure Christianity unquestionably excites, and will excite and diffuse as it becomes better understood and more generally adopted; and its tendency, therefore, is to mitigate the evils and prevent the recurrence of wars, until its full influence shall realise the promised universal reign of the Prince of Peace.

Of late, the subject has been regarded as less belonging to theology than to humanity and benevolence. This is by no means to be regretted. Numerous and laudable efforts are making by societies in this country and in America to communicate information upon it; and who will not heartily wish them success? For an account of these, and of the tracts issued by them, I must refer the reader to the Annual Reports of the Society for the Promotion of Permanent and Universal Peace, established in London June 14, 1816.

I have lengthened this Appendix much beyond my intention, which was merely to put together two or three quotations and remarks, which could not conveniently have been placed in the Notes. It cannot conclude better than with the following extract from a most useful work, which I should be glad to persuade its able author to republish, and every Englishman to read and profit by:

"Those who reason in favour of the perfectibility of man, draw all that is solid in their arguments from the possibility of the reduction of the moral evil by which the world is oppressed. They see the labour of man employed rather in preparing the apparatus of death than in producing the means of life; and they say, were the moral sentiments of men corrected, war and show would have no place; and the expense of war and luxury being converted to the uses of life, would supply all the real wants of all that live. To a certain extent this must be admitted to be true; and the prospect is so cheering, that we hope the vision is divine. The first step appears to be the instruction of the people. They must be taught that war is ever injurious to their interest; that it is the contrivance of tyranny for the subjugation of ignorance; and that as long as it is allowed in any country, the comfort of the people can never be secured. Convinced that this is true, we are proud to be as 'a voice crying in the wilderness' to hasten and assist the approach of human happiness" (*A View of the Causes and Consequences of English Wars,* by ANTHONY ROBINSON, 1798).

LECTURE VII.—ON HUMAN PERFECTIBILITY.

"The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. xi. 15).

THE attention with which the Course of Lectures has been favoured which I this night bring to a conclusion renders such a request wholly unnecessary, or I should feel it incumbent on me to solicit, especially on the present occasion, your seriousness and candour for a subject very liable to misconstruction, and for arguments which, though very trite perhaps, require both a calm and patient consideration fairly to estimate their weight. The various controversies which have existed on this subject have thrown it into great confusion. Some Christians cling to the hope of a Millennium, while others attempt its demolition. Among philosophers, the notion of the Perfectibility of Man has been exulted in as true and denounced as mischievous. These terms have been sometimes reckoned synonymous, and at other times have been opposed to each other; while of both, and with advocates as well as opponents, there has been a great diversity of explanation. It is expedient, therefore, to premise that I consider them as closely connected, and hope for that approach towards perfection in man which Christianity in its purest and most powerful state can realise; and which will be accomplished in that universal diffusion of its knowledge and influence which is predicted in the scriptures, and, from the mention of a thousand years in the Revelation, called the Millennium. Whether that marks the precise term, or is to be taken for an indefinite period; and whether it will be accompanied with the personal reign of Christ on earth, and the resurrection of the most distinguished of his disciples to share its glories,—are questions of considerable interest in themselves; but, not being essentially connected with the present subject, I shall not embarrass it by their introduction. With the idea of human perfectibility some absurdities have been associated, for which the use of that expression should not make me responsible. Such is that of *organic* perfectibility—the triumph of mind over matter, so as to banish disease, and long retard, if not repel, the stroke of death. Such, also, are all minute and particular schemes of the condition of man in that period, which only show the ingenuity or folly of their inventors, and are mere fancy pictures, with probably very dissimilar features from what the reality will present. I have merely a general anticipation of a state of very high improvement, in knowledge, liberty, peace, virtue, and felicity, to which man will be, in the latter days, conducted by Christianity. That such an anticipation is well founded is *what* I attempt to prove, and *all*. If we love our fellow-creatures, we can scarcely be indisposed to inquire into their future destiny, nor backward to hail with gladness intimations of brighter scenes than have occupied the past and occupy the present of their history. That prospect seems to me to be grounded on the plain declarations of scripture and the express assertions of prophecy, as well as supported by rational deduction from observation and fact. Indeed, the expectation of its realisation *was* very generally entertained. Of late, a more gloomy system has prevailed, both with religionists and philosophers, which dooms the human race for ever to alternations of good and evil, instead of allowing the hope of a gradual advance. This change is much owing to disappointed hopes. It is a revulsion of feeling after the bold expectations which, twenty-five years ago, floated on men's minds. But that embittered feeling should now be corrected. It should not become philosophy, nor should the minds of the rising generation be bowed to despair, unless there be convincing proof that all was fallacious. Let us rather revert, now that the storm is passing, to the inspiring faith of elder times. For ages, holy and benevolent men entertained this glorious hope, received it as a truth with gratitude, and cherished it with devotion. It was the spring and solace of their souls. In their career of successful exertion, it was the heart-stirring motive that impelled their efforts; and they hailed each triumph over vice and misery as a pledge of its truth and an earnest of its accomplishment; and in their failures, it saved them from despondency. It was the common faith of Christians, or rather of the world; for here the speculations of philosophers harmonised with the dictates of heaven's commissioned teachers; and the songs of idolatrous bards pealed in transient yet blissful unison with the predictive strains of the harp of Judah. It ascended in evidence and loveliness from the inspiration of poetry to that of prophecy, and from the plausibility of conjecture to the certainty of revelation. When theological warfare raged, when systems were created and systems destroyed, it passed, unattacked and untouched, through the confusion, reverenced, like the heralds of old in battle, as the sacred minister of heaven and peace alike by hostile and infuriate parties. At length came that period of wild and daring speculation, when the unprecedented convulsions of the political world were only paralleled by those of the moral world, and both seemed fraught with anarchy and desolation. The bonds of society were loosened; altars and thrones and empires fell; and their destroyers, wild with conquest, and frantic with impiety, threatened to blot out the light of revelation, and subvert the throne of God. The philosophers of the day discarded the Christian hope of another world,—a world of immortality and perfect bliss,—and gave us in exchange the vision of complete happiness, equality, and perpetuity here, to be realised by the omnipotence of human energy. This sparkling bubble has burst; and at their theories men smile now, as at the incoherencies of slumber or the ravings of insanity. But the reaction has been too strong. Society, like the individual, is liable to passion,—may be intoxicated with hope, or paralysed by despair. Events then fired their expectations; but they mistook the direction of the current, and were dashed upon the rocks. They connected their extravagances with the rational hope of an immense improvement in the state of mankind; and there is danger lest both should be exploded together—lest a valuable truth should be discarded because it has been linked with baseless reveries and palpable absurdities. An opposite system has been raised on the ruins of this,—a system not less deadly to the hopes and best feelings of mankind. We are forbidden to hope more than a temporary advance, to be compensated by succeeding gloom. Because men no longer imagine, with some, that man may raise himself even to immortality, they abandon the prospect of improvement for the heartless notion of running an eternal round of transitory prosperity, followed by war and vice and misery. To this a celebrated *Essay on Population* has greatly contributed, though the facts there adduced by no means warrant all the inferences of the author himself, still less those of many of his followers; yet they have made it the fashion to despair. Because man read not rightly then the page of observation, he is now taught to doubt that of revelation. The avenues of the mind are barred against hope, as though she were the most unwelcome visitant. It is true these fancied chains are but withes, which need no Herculean strength to tear them asunder: the verbal critic nibbles at a text, and thinks that when he has mangled a word, he has destroyed a principle; the philosopher sets up a calculation of the impossibilities that impede Omnipotence; and the politician points to the supposed failure of one attempt to ameliorate the state of man as a demonstration of his miserable and degraded destiny. Let not the sneers of such, or the dread of reputed enthusiasm, prevent the assertion of what is true, scriptural, important, useful, and consolatory, at a time when most it is needed. Let us cling to scripture; let us lay hold on prophecy: on the summit of that mountain all is brightness and sunshine, while clouds darken and desolate the plain below. The two systems are in full contrast. How different the views they give us of God and man, the present and the future! We may surely demand that a belief so abhorrent to our nature should rest on no slight foundation. On no partial evidence let that sentence be pronounced which consigns to the darkness of the grave our dearest expectations.

"If that be true which Nature never told,
Let Wisdom smile not on her conquered field;
No rapture dawns, no treasure is revealed!
Oh, let her read, nor loudly nor elate,
The doom that bars us from a better fate;

> But, sad as angels for the good man's sin,
> Weep to record, and blush to give it in!"

The first appeal is to experience. What is the language of the past? Has the human race been stationary, gradually deteriorating, alternating between improvement and degradation, or gradually advancing? Let facts decide—not minute, partial, isolated events, but the broad facts of universal history. Was the human race ever in a state superior to the present? If so, point to the record, and in that interesting narrative let us forget the humiliating contrast. Was it in that first, dimly seen stage of being, *the infancy of mankind,* when man was scarcely distinguished but by name from his fellow-tenants of the earth; when his language was little more than inarticulate cries; the summit of his science, to construct the cabin that should be a little shelter from the storm; and to procure a bare subsistence, the summit of his bliss? Was it when those wretched individuals formed *savage hordes,* their abode unfixed, their occupation war or hunting, their religion the worship of stars or clouds, no law but force, and no restraint on their passions but the physical impossibility of their gratification? Was it in the next stage of society, when those hordes were amalgamated under a *barbarous despotism,* in which boundless power was wielded by individual caprice for purposes of wanton cruelty, and men became like beasts, unreasoning as the most senseless, oppressed as the most enduring, or bloody as the most savage? Was it when civilisation was confined to a few small states in Greece, and when even there three-fourths were slaves, holding life at the capricious will of their masters; those proud masters themselves the slaves of ignorance and the dupes of priestcraft, fluctuating between external war and internal commotion, anarchy, and tyranny? Was it even in the best days of Rome,—of Rome polluted by the abomination of domestic slavery, and waging eternal war with the world, offering only the alternative of subjection or extermination; rude in arts, with no philosophy, and with a religion whose gods and ceremonies make one blush or shudder? Was it in *subsequent times* of confusion, persecution, and distraction? or in yet later ages, when kings tyrannised over people, and priests over kings; when every petty chieftain had a property of men; when perversions of justice and corruptions of Christianity passed unreproved and unnoticed? To what point will ye turn back the wheels of time, and bid them stop as at a season of higher improvement than the present?—or what branch of knowledge can be selected, connected with the happiness of mankind, which has experienced a retrograde motion? Did the ancients ever rival or approximate to the moderns in the *useful arts?* Did they cultivate the ground with greater skill, or frame more commodious dwellings, or temper the ore with nicer art? or did their looms produce robes more gorgeous or clothing more commodious than ours? or are their vessels and coasting-boats to be compared with the vessels and skill of those by whom the boundless ocean has been traversed, and new worlds discovered? From the arts turn to the *sciences.* Contrast their egregious errors and cloudy theories with the accumulated facts and solid principles and stupendous discoveries of later ages. Are *political institutions* selected? In these, perhaps, they most excelled; but with all the boasted freedom of the noblest of them, they still consulted the protection of the few, the oppression of the many. Slaves, the bulk of the inhabitants, were beneath the laws. Their best governments ought to be compared with the best modern governments,—not with Spain* or Turkey, but with England and America; but with regard to the mass of the people, there is probably no government in Europe under which their condition is not far better than under the most celebrated governments of antiquity. In *religious knowledge and moral theory* they are infinitely distanced. A list of vices exploded now, but fearlessly practised then, might be framed, which would strike with horror. All sound philosophy of man, his nature, duties, and capabilities, is of modern growth. The world is wiser; and with wisdom, virtue and happiness have a close alliance. Our improvements in the arts are felt every day, by every labourer in his cot. The better administration of justice spreads peace and security over nations. A wider intercourse promotes useful knowledge and philanthropic plans. Our benevolent institutions are of modern origin and rapid progression. Information is diffused to an unexampled extent. Domestic slavery has a very limited existence, and foreign slavery has received a death-blow. The grossness of ancient superstition has retired to the abodes of savages, nor even there maintains its ground. The domestic affections are called forth, and a refined enjoyment is scattered over countries, of which they had not even that remote conception which we form of the higher felicity of futurity.*

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* This, and other references to Spain and to the Inquisition, make it necessary to remind the reader that these Lectures were delivered in 1818. I leave such expressions as they were; there is something in their present incorrectness not unpleasant, nor unfavourable to the argument.

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* To illustrate the several particulars of this progression would require volumes, and perhaps their compilation would not be either an uninteresting or a useless task. Were I to begin extracts, I know not where they would end, and a capricious selection would be worth nothing as proof. I must therefore content myself with a reference or two to books commonly accessible.

The historical views usually prefixed to works of science, or to be found in Dictionaries, Encyclopædias, &c., abundantly demonstrate the superiority of the moderns. Astronomy has most of the appearance of an exception, and, undoubtedly, great discoveries were made in this science at an early period, which afterwards sank into oblivion. The more, however, that the claims set up for Egypt, India, and China have been scrutinised, the less tenable have they appeared. Every concession that can be required would still leave unrivalled the brilliant progress made since the time of Newton to the complete perfection of astronomy in the writings of La Place. Besides that almost every science has received immense accessions by discovery and invention,—as the mathematics by logarithms, the fluxional calculus, &c.,—two circumstances deserve notice: 1. They are generally cultivated; the degree of scientific knowledge which would once have conferred celebrity and immortality is now, in this country, attained by thousands of obscure individuals. 2. The application of mathematical acquirements to the multiplication of the comforts of life has been wonderfully extended. The repartition of the overflowed lands of Egypt (if the common story of the invention of Geometry be true), and the defence of Syracuse by Archimedes, seem to be the only degradation (as the old philosophers deemed it) of the pure sciences to useful purposes in antiquity. Now they are chiefly and most successfully cultivated on account of their subservience to such objects.

Chemistry, with all its kindred studies,—as Electricity, Galvanism, Mineralogy, Geology, &c.,—belongs solely to the moderns, and has already produced improvements in machinery, manufactures, and almost every department connected with the conveniences of life, beyond all calculation, and continues to produce them without intermission.

In all that relates to *facts*, as to either number or certainty, or the use to be made of them, there can be no comparison. Geography, Chronology, Natural History, and even Civil History, have partaken largely of the general improvement. However interesting and valuable

I know it is objected that this deduction is too confined, and applies only to a small part of the globe; that the ruins of Athens are no monuments of the progress of man, nor the deserted towers of Babylon temples of his perfectibility. But has the proportion of uncivilised nations ever been less than it is now, or the prospect of their

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may be the historical productions of antiquity, nothing can be more evident than that they abound in contradictions, obscurities, and falsehoods, from which extensive research, accurate habits of weighing evidence, and the increased communication of different countries, render modern records comparatively exempt.

In Oratory and Statuary the palm must be conceded to Greece. Their religion, government, and perhaps climate, led them to early excellence. But the nature of these arts precludes progression, by their admitting something like absolute perfection, which may be soon attained, and can never be surpassed. Painting has limits from the same cause, although it was reserved for a later age to reach them.

As to the general condition of society, Hume remarks that, "to one who considers coolly of the subject, it will appear that human nature in general really enjoys more liberty at present, in the most arbitrary governments of Europe, than it ever did during the most flourishing period of ancient times." Some very brief extracts from his *Essay on the Populousness of Ancient Nations* must here be allowed me: "The custom of exposing old, useless, or sick slaves in an island of the Tiber, there to starve, seems to have been pretty common in Rome. The *ergastula*, or dungeons where slaves in chains were beat to work, were very common all over Italy. Nothing so common in all trials, even of civil causes, as to call for the evidence of slaves; which was always extorted by the most exquisite torments. In ancient history we may always observe, where one party prevailed, whether the nobles or people, that they immediately butchered all of the opposite party they laid their hands on, and banished such as had been so fortunate as to escape their fury. No form of process, no law, no trial, no pardon. Trade, manufactures, industry, were nowhere in former ages so flourishing as they are at present in Europe. The only garb of the ancients, both for males and females, seems to have been a kind of flannel, which they wore commonly white or gray, and which they scoured as often as it grew dirty. I do not remember any passage in any ancient author wherein the growth of any city is ascribed to the establishment of a manufacture. The commerce which is said to flourish is chiefly the exchange of those commodities for which different soils and climates were suited."

For ancient morals, both in theory and practice, see Priestley's *Institutes*, part ii. ch. i.; and *On the Improvement of Mankind*, part iii. ch. v.: "On the Future Condition of the World in general;" also Law's *Theory of Religion;* Aspland's *Sermon on the Power of Truth;* Murray *On the Character of Nations and Progress of Society;* Price's *Evidence for a Future Period of Improvement*, &c.

emerging from barbarism ever greater? Surely not. Nor let us be told that empire has fluctuated, as if that had much influence on the question. The conquerors have oft become the vanquished. But they were slaves when their lords led them forth to slaughter, and probably not more virtuous or happy than when, in their turn, they were subdued by others. That there are continual fluctuations; that Egypt has retrograded, and that China seems stationary; that the sail of commerce veers from coast to coast, and the sceptre of dominion changes hands,—is all very consistent with a gradual advance in the whole species: these are but the bubblings and tossings of the surface of the ocean, while a strong under-current bears resistlessly along in its allotted course. The degradation of one nation may be subservient to the elevation of the world. Rome was humbled in being conquered by barbarians. But look at what those barbarians have become; there is more than ample compensation. Beneath that mass of barbarism the fire of intellect lay buried, but not extinguished: it was but a pile of fuel for its gathering strength; at the revival of letters in the Reformation, that fire again towered up in brilliance; tyranny shall perish in its blaze, and nations revel in the splendour of its illumination.*

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* The rude destroyers of the Roman Empire reaped blessings which they little expected, or at first knew how to value, from the vanquished: the effect of their embracing the Christianity, such as it was, of that age, is thus described by Gibbon:

"Christianity, which opened the gates of heaven to the barbarians, introduced an important change in their moral and political condition. They received at the same time the use of letters, so essential to a religion whose doctrines are contained in a sacred book; and while they studied the divine truth, their minds were insensibly enlarged by the distant view of history, of nature, of the arts, and of society. The version of the scriptures into their native tongue, which had facilitated their conversion, must excite among their clergy some curiosity to read the original text, to understand the sacred Liturgy of the Church, and to examine in the writings of the Fathers the chain of ecclesiastical tradition. These spiritual gifts were preserved in the Greek and Latin languages, which concealed the inestimable monuments of ancient learning. The immortal productions of Virgil, Cicero, and Livy, which were accessible to the Christian barbarians, maintained a silent intercourse between the reign of Augustus and the times of Clovis and Charlemagne.

"The emulation of mankind was encouraged by the remembrance of a more perfect state; and the flame of science was secretly kept alive, to warm and enlighten the mature age of the western world.

It is obvious, upon the whole, that a mighty and happy change has taken place. It has not been sudden, but progressive and accelerated. Why should not the future correspond with the past? Why should not the sun of improvement rise to-morrow as it rose to-day? Whatever be the obstacles that obstruct the progress of man, they have already operated in different countries and ages; the world has advanced in spite of them; and why should we argue from their past feebleness to their future omnipotence? New ones, more powerful, must arise, or the auspicious progress which they could not prevent must continue. Or have we now reached an impassable boundary? Are we

In the most corrupt state of Christianity, the barbarians might learn justice from the law, and mercy from the gospel; and if the knowledge of their duty was insufficient to guide their actions or to regulate their passions, they were sometimes restrained by conscience, and frequently punished by remorse. But the direct authority of religion was less effectual than the holy communion which united them with their Christian brethren in spiritual friendship. The influence of these sentiments contributed to secure their fidelity in the service or the alliance of the Romans, to alleviate the horrors of war, to moderate the insolence of conquest, and to preserve in the downfall of the empire a permanent respect for the name and institutions of Rome. In the days of paganism, the priests of Gaul and Germany reigned over the people, and controlled the jurisdiction of the magistrates; and the zealous proselytes transferred an equal or more ample measure of devout obedience to the pontiffs of the Christian faith. The sacred character of the bishops was supported by their temporal possessions; they obtained an honourable seat in the legislative assemblies of soldiers and freemen; and it was their interest as well as their duty to mollify, by peaceful counsels, the fierce spirit of the barbarians. The perpetual correspondence of the Latin clergy, the frequent pilgrimages to Rome and Jerusalem, and the growing authority of the popes, cemented the union of the Christian republic, and gradually produced the similar manners and common jurisprudence which have distinguished from the rest of mankind the independent and even hostile nations of modern Europe" (*Decline and Fall*, ch. xxxviii.).

Thus it is that the greatest blessings come upon mankind incidentally and unexpectedly. From the zeal of modern missionaries to Calvinise the South-Sea Islanders much spiritual good is not perhaps to be expected; but, together with the Assembly's Catechism, they have carried something much better to that degraded race. Who would have conjectured twenty years ago, that now a *printing-press* would be at constant work in Otaheite? The world owes much to the men who have done this, though it was not the primary object of those zealous and enduring efforts which, whatever be their opinions, are truly Christian, and deserving of the highest commendation.

now, for the first time, become stationary?—now, when every day teems with some scientific discovery or useful invention, with displays of genius for the enlightened, and facilities of instruction for the ignorant, or with new efforts of benevolence in behalf of the poor, the prisoner, and the slave?—now, when schools rise in every village, and the Bible travels into every cottage; when the principles of civil and religious liberty are better understood than ever, useful information is more widely diffused, and a more general, practical conviction prevails that man should be universally the friend of man? Bold must he be who can look round him, and assert that the present, with all its just subjects of complaint, is not a season of rapid advancement.

The invention of printing, with its accompaniments and results in the increased communication of countries with each other, the prevalence of discussion, especially of religious truth, the diffusion of knowledge, and the approaching universality of education, preclude for ever the recurrence of some of those vicissitudes by which the world has apparently been thrown back and darkened for ages. We cannot again tread that dreary road; no powers of evil can revive its horrors. Before that can be accomplished, the human mind must be brutalised by ages of degradation; all records of the past must be annihilated; books must be destroyed, and printing forgotten; all our rich heritage of freedom and wisdom alienated, and a universal combination formed to blindfold posterity. But into this no priestcraft can cajole, no tyranny compel mankind. It would be a miracle of omnipotent malignity. Here, then, we may look boldly on to the future, and reply to the demand for further resources for improvement. We find them in the gigantic strides of science, especially as connected with the mind of man; in a pure philosophy, which develops the laws and instructs us in the formation and regulation of that mind; in the prospect of useful information becoming the portion of mankind; in the civilisation of the barbarous, and the improvement of political institutions, which, yielding to increased knowledge, become in turn the causes of greater increase; and, above all, in the mighty word of God, which, shaking off the corruptions that enveloped it, has begun its career of triumph, and shall "go forth conquering and to conquer." These are engines of wondrous force. Who shall calculate their powers? who shall limit their results? Is it enthusiasm to expect that to them shall yield the passions and prejudices of mankind? Is it folly to think that by them shall be realised those bright visions which hope suggests, benevolence cherishes, experience confirms, and which are sanctioned by the certain declarations of the immutable God? If this be enthusiasm, she wears the garb of truth, rests on the rock of ages, and is crowned with the rainbow of heavenly promise! Ever be she the inmate of my bosom! Let present comforts fade away—let transitory vicissitude make life the sport of fortune—let adversity and depression cloud my horizon—

> "Cease every joy to glimmer on the mind;
> But leave, oh, leave, the light of hope behind!"—

that hope which breathes no selfish wish, but longs for the universal brotherhood of man, the coming of the kingdom of the God of love.

With regard to mere *physical science*, it is admitted that knowledge once gained is never lost, and must go on to an indefinite increase. The discoveries of Kepler, Newton, Franklin, Davy, once made, are made for all nations and all posterity. But it has been contended that in whatever relates to the duties, passions, and happiness of man, there is not the same progress; the greatest mischiefs that the world has endured have been deliberately inflicted by men of such acquirements as can scarcely be expected to become universal. Profound wisdom and the strongest talent have been united with ambition or envy or bigotry, and have served the cause of war, persecution, or slavery. Some higher power than these is therefore requisite, and that is religion—Christianity. The gospel is not true, or it is fully able to control and purify the most potent passions, and to direct the highest energies of intellect to the promotion of the general good; it is not of God, or it shall be the universal religion of man; inspiration, prophecy, providence, must be subverted and falsified, or the hopes which we have shown they dictate will surely be realised; Jesus is not the anointed Son of God, or the period will arrive when his second coming, the establishment of his spiritual dominion, shall present the accomplishment of the text, and "the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."

From the *Christian* this argument admits of no reply. His religion is the authoritative assertor of its own destiny to universal empire over the faith and hearts of men, and of their consequent knowledge, piety, and mutual kindness. The proof of human perfectibility, as we have explained it, is involved in the proof that Christianity is of God, and can only be destroyed in the destruction of revelation. The *unbeliever*, indeed, may say, How is it that Christianity has not produced these effects already where it has prevailed? Rome is Christian, and Rome persecuted; Britain is Christian, and Britain is warlike; Spain is Christian, and Spain groans in despotism. We recur to that distinction which Christianity itself marks in its prophecies, and which we have all along endeavoured to show, between real and nominal Christianity. The corrupt system which has claimed that name neutralises most of the benignant tendencies of the gospel, while its own malignant powers have full and deadly play. But to all the desolating evils of society Christianity is directly opposed, and to their downfall is fully adequate.

This we have already shown in the case of *war*. Were governments Christian, they would not violate the repose of countries. Were people Christian, they would not hire themselves out to kill without knowing why; the military profession would be at an end. There would not be less courage in the world. The first Christians dared die, but not fight. They would not kill at Cæsar's command; but they submitted to be killed, and, dying, overthrew the altars of his gods. But this part of our subject is already discussed. What other evils are there too strong for Christianity? The sufferings of society may be chiefly attributed to the abuse of power by those whose authority should only be used for the general good; to the great inequalities of property and privilege which commonly obtain, and the vice and misery flowing from the poverty and ignorance to which this inequality consigns numbers; and to establishments and institutions which impede inquiry, knowledge, and pure religion. These are the great elements of evil, forming various combinations in different times and countries, but in all producing diversified misery. What human hecatombs have bled in sacrifice to the mad ambition of princes! It is computed that Julius Cæsar caused the loss of between two and three millions of lives. But why select individuals? When has not power made this globe of earth its football, and crushed its inhabitants like insects? What stream of note has not the blood of our own countrymen swelled and stained? or what soil have not their bodies fertilised? How does the imperfection of society, such imperfection as Christianity must remedy, appear in the record of its greatest benefactors, to whom posthumous veneration has but too often been a poor atonement for persecution through life, and, in many cases, ignominious death! We might easily adduce a sickening list of martyrs to their own benevolence and the general good. How wretched in most states is the condition of the lowest classes! And what can be expected from them but vice? The Inquisition yet blots out by penalties the light of intellect; and many a state religion is the frowning barrier to protect a moral wilderness, which pure Christianity would soon cause to "rejoice and blossom as the rose" in all the loveliness of knowledge, peace, and virtue.

And what claim has all this to eternity? or what is here that has not sometimes yielded to a feebler engine than Christianity? Patriotism has destroyed abused power, and made authority but the minister of God for good; why should not Christianity? Time and knowledge and commerce have worn out feudal rights and vassalage, and mitigated the evils of disparity of station; and why should they defy Christianity? The laws of Lycurgus for ages destroyed the insufferable mischiefs entailed by enormous inequalities of property: have the precepts of Jesus less energy? Policy and passion have levelled institutions with the dust, and trampled on antiquity and prejudice; a corrupted gospel silenced the oracles of the heathen deities, and changed their temples into churches: and what establishments shall resist reviving truth?*

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* On the probable dissolution of whatever institutions may obstruct the spread of Christianity and the improvement of mankind, see *Hartley on Man*, part ii. ch. iv. § ii.: "Of the Expectation of

The direct operation of pure Christianity on societies is yet untried. As it became general in the Roman Empire it also became corrupted, and had no longer the same heavenly control over individuals. But we *do* know that every fiercest and strongest passion has bowed before it, and every corrupt desire and natural weakness vanished. Scarcely can mightier antagonists be found than those already vanquished. And improvement is essentially progressive; its course is accelerated. "Such has it hitherto been, and such the nature of things assures us it must continue to be. Like a river, into which as it flows new currents are continually discharging themselves, it must in-

Bodies Politic, the Jews in particular, and the World in general, during the present State of the Earth."

No evils seem so deeply or generally to have impressed the minds of political speculators as those caused by the inequalities of private property. Its equalisation or destruction is the basis of most of the imaginary republics which have been presented to the world by ingenious men, from Plato to Sir Thomas More, from More to Harrington, and from Harrington to Wallace. Swift (*Gulliver*, part iv. ch. vi.), Mably (*De la Législation*), and Godwin, with his disciples or coadjutors, have attacked it with powerful reasoning. Paley (in his celebrated Illustration of the Pigeons) has made the objection more striking than the reply; and Price (*Four Dissertations on Providence*, &c., p. 137, note) was inclined to place its extinction amongst the future improvements which he so ardently anticipated. What is more extraordinary, we find the same notions in real legislation. The equal division of the Spartan possessions by Lycurgus, the establishment of common tables, and prohibition of the precious metals, were, in effect, the annihilation of private property; and the scheme was as successful and enduring as most human institutions in similar circumstances. It appears to have been the desire of Solon to impose a similar government on Athens; but he found it impracticable. In the Mosaic code, the general restitution at the year of jubilee forbade the accumulation of landed property; while the acquisition of any other was rendered difficult by the suppression of usury—that is, of interest. The primitive Christians set out with having all things in common.

This coincidence of philosophers and practical men, heathens and Christians, monarchists and republicans, divines and infidels, ancients and moderns, on such a subject is surprising. However it be accounted for, thus far we may safely go—that great riches and extreme poverty are pernicious and depraving to those who possess the one or endure the other, and their existence has a very injurious influence upon the intermediate classes of society. To the spread of Christian feeling and political philosophy we must look for the disposition and wisdom to mitigate this evil, or to do more than mitigate—if more be, indeed, practicable.

crease, till it becomes a wide-spreading stream, fertilising and enriching all countries."

The great difficulty which modern speculation opposes as insuperable to this prospect is derived from the principle of population. We have seen the fallacy of this as an apology for wars; nor is it really more formidable as levelled against human improvement. Wallace (who first advanced the argument, since adopted by Malthus, to combat the theories of the author of *Political Justice*) supposes that the establishment of a universal, perfect government would be succeeded by such an increase of the human species above the supply of food, as to revive vice, misery, and contention for their destruction. This danger is very remote, and equally unreal; for the supposition is of a state of society full of wisdom and benevolence, while the danger implies a total want of prudent foresight and virtuous resolution, which, by timely exercise, would be amply sufficient to bar its arrival. The real mischief is, as Malthus states, not in the future, but in the present. What he calls the evil of a redundant population *is* felt in most countries; and why? Not because the earth is fully cultivated, not because almost every country might not maintain five times the number of its present inhabitants, but because arbitrary institutions interpose between man and the soil. They prevent the increase of subsistence in order to preserve luxury, dependence, and a thousand other evils. Let these give way, as they must, and the apprehended disorder of redundant population is postponed to an immeasurable distance, and vanishes into thin air.*

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* Wallace, in his speculations on a perfect government (*Various Prospects of Mankind, Nature, and Providence*), looks at both sides of the question; Godwin has taken from him the *pro*, and Malthus the *con;* the one so adorning his borrowed argument with his own intellectual treasures, and the other wrapping up his in such a mass of statistical reports, that the original author might at first feel as much difficulty in recognising his own ideas as Bloomfield did when one of his Suffolk ballads was turned into Latin. But although Malthus's confutation of Godwin is only a repetition of Wallace's confutation of himself, there are differences between these writers of some importance. According to Wallace, the checks to population are distresses produced by "wrong notions, a bad taste, and vicious habits, strengthened by the defects of education and government." According to Malthus, the immediate checks are vice, misery, and moral restraint; and the real and ultimate check, a deficiency of the means of sub-

The fact is, that, if unshackled by arbitrary restrictions, population will always command and produce subsistence, until the productiveness of the earth be exhausted. So far from belonging to the most formidable sources of evil, his-

sistence, which, he contends, can never keep pace with the natural rate of increase of the human species. Wallace never thought of a deficiency of subsistence while there were animals to be slain, fish to be caught, and lands to be cultivated. It will be observed, that his ultimate checks are Malthus's immediate checks, with one remarkable exception,—"*the defects of government.*" To this cause Godwin refers (very unjustly) almost all the vices and misery that prevail in civil society; and Malthus replies, "That though human institutions appear to be, and indeed often are, the obvious and obtrusive causes of much mischief to society, they are, in reality, light and superficial in comparison with those deeper-seated causes of evil which result from the *laws of nature* and the passions of mankind." This is a strange exhibition—the infidel denouncing human errors, and the clergyman transferring the charge to Divine Providence!

Malthus asserts, that "the great art of Dr. Mandeville consisted in misnomers." His own art or error may perhaps be found in the same quarter. For instance, by the phrase, "*means of subsistence,*" in the *Essay on Population*, we are not to understand the produce which the earth, or any particular portion of it, is capable of yielding to the labour of its inhabitants. He repeatedly allows, that almost every country in the world is able to support a much larger population than it does at present. Nay, we are not to understand even the *actual produce;* for "by an increase in the means of subsistence is here" (in the statement of his theory) "meant such an increase as will enable the mass of the society to command more food. An increase might certainly take place, which in the actual state of a particular society would not be distributed to the lower classes" (vol. i. p. 34, ed. 5). What he does mean may be illustrated thus: suppose two sailors cast away upon an uninhabited island, where they find fruits amply sufficient to support both; but one, being stronger than the other, takes possession of the whole, makes a slave of his comrade, compels him to toil, and denies him a share of the wholesome food of which abundance is attainable; the latter is reduced to feed upon noxious substances, becomes diseased, is starved, dies. This Malthus calls keeping population down to the level of subsistence, or limiting it by a deficiency of the means of subsistence. Is not this a *misnomer?* It was the bad government of Tom, the strong sailor, that destroyed Harry, the weak one, while the means of subsistence hung unplucked upon the tree. Or another supposition may be made,—that both of them were too idle to climb the tree for wholesome food, or too ignorant to estimate its superiority; and therefore prematurely depopulated our island by contenting themselves with the limited and unwholesome supply which was nearer at hand. To this very different case Malthus applies the same terms, and with as much impropriety. In his tour of misery round the world, cases analogous to these, even according to his own statements, are continually tory shows that increase of numbers belongs to the principles of improvement, and has generally been found in those times and places in which the most rapid and brilliant advances have been made in science and the arts and general know-

occurring. As an example of the first supposition, take Egypt or Turkey, where the rapacity, oppression, and bad policy of the government starve a population whose numbers, under British institutions, might be at least quadrupled, and every individual four times as well supplied. For the second, take the American Indians. A dozen hunters cannot exist upon a tract of country which would well support a hundred shepherds or a thousand agriculturists (book i. ch. iv., x.). It seems absurd to say that population is kept down, in these instances, by the *laws of nature refusing the means of subsistence :* the means *are* there ; and their being called forth is only prevented by the despotism of the rulers, or by the idleness and ignorance of the inhabitants. These are the real evils, and they are curable by judicious reformation on the one hand, and by the diffusion of knowledge, the parent of improved manners and habits, on the other.

Montesquieu truly observes, "Les païs ne sont pas cultivés en raison de leur fertilité, mais en raison de leur liberté." Had America remained the dependent of England, those immense resources would not have been broken up which now yield plenty and wealth to the outcasts of Europe. The French Revolution, whatever its evils, has increased at once the numbers, respectability, and enjoyments of the peasantry.

Scotland is a demonstration of the power of instruction to produce similar effects. Its population has increased largely during the last century; but that the means of subsistence (in Malthus's sense of the phrase) and the means of enjoyment have increased still more, is evident from the following authentic statements. The first is from Fletcher's *Second Discourse on the Affairs of Scotland*, and refers to the year 1698.

"There are at this day in Scotland (besides a great many poor families very meanly provided for by the church-boxes, with others who, by living upon bad food, fall into various diseases) two hundred thousand people begging from door to door. These are not only no way advantageous, but a very grievous burden to so poor a country. And though the number of them be perhaps double to what it was formerly, by reason of this present great distress, yet in all times there have been about one hundred thousand of those vagabonds, who have lived without any regard or subjection either to the laws of the land, or even those of God and nature ; fathers incestuously accompanying with their own daughters, the son with the mother, and the brother with the sister. No magistrate could ever discover, or be informed, which way one in a hundred of these wretches died, or that ever they were baptised. Many murders have been discovered among them ; and they are not only a most unspeakable oppression to poor tenants (who, if they give not bread, or some kind of provision, to perhaps forty such villains in one day, are sure to be insulted by them), but they rob many poor people who live in houses distant from any neighbourhood. In years of plenty, many thousands of them meet together in ledge. Of this, the Grecian republics, the Italian states of the middle ages, the Protestant countries of Europe since the Reformation, and America, are instances. That temporary evil may attend its operation, especially in an early

the mountains, where they feast and riot for many days ; and at country weddings, markets, burials, and other the like public occasions, they are to be seen, both men and women, perpetually drunk, cursing, blaspheming, and fighting together."

The other is from a speech in the House of Commons, of Hope, Lord Advocate of Scotland, in 1803. "He ascribed to the establishment of those schools all that intelligence which was so observable in that part of the United Kingdom, and which so much attracted the attention of strangers who visited it. To it, also, was to be ascribed the good morals, the social order, the loyalty, the paucity of crimes, the proper attendance on divine worship, and the increasing wealth of that part of the country. The paucity of crime was so remarkable, that there were more convicts transported in one Quarter Sessions from Manchester than from all Scotland in the course of the year. Executions in Scotland, on an average, do not amount to more than six in the year." See also, for the effect of knowledge on the lower classes, an article (ascribed to Dr. Chalmers) on the "Causes and Cure of Pauperism," in the *Edinburgh Review*, No. 55.

Here, then, are two methods, established by facts, in which what are called the evils of a redundant population are, to a great degree, dispelled, and yet the absolute amount of people is much increased. Let them, then, be called plainly what they are, the evils of bad government, or of ignorance, for which rulers are partly responsible, as they can do much for instructing the community, and not be attributed to laws of nature. This misnomer has made the *Essay on Population* so favourite a book with those who profit by the worst part of *things as they are*, and who never fail to throw it in the faces of all who plead for improvement.

The great difference between Wallace and Malthus is, as to the period at which the "pressure of population upon the limits of subsistence" interposes a bar to human improvement ; which the former postpones till the earth shall be fully peopled, and the latter contends has long since arrived in every country.

But mankind have improved, and are making great advances, notwithstanding the operations of this evil principle.

Yet, if it be true that the tendency of population is to increase in a geometrical ratio, and food can only be increased in an arithmetical ratio, we have a law of nature more fruitful in miseries than the worst human institutions or the grossest ignorance, and presenting a difficulty which can never be surmounted.

Let the first assumption, though never true in *fact*, be granted ; the latter is denied. Food has no tendency to increase but what is given to it by the will and power of man, which may be in any assignable ratio whatever that the limits of the earth will allow. It has been estimated that "the natural fertility of the soil is not equal to the one-thirtieth part of the artificial fertility which may be created stage, is a circumstance common to all the progressive principles. "Nations," observes a philosophical writer on the progress of society, "as they advance in numbers and wealth, are commonly found to become more dissolute and immoral. Now, generally speaking, in consequence of principles deeply implanted in human nature, an increase in these particulars is continually taking place. For some time, therefore, there is, as it were, a continual progress downwards, a perpetual multiplication of vices and disorders; and this effect would be still more evident, were it not for the influence of certain restraints, which are seasonably brought into action. After a certain period, however,

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by the skill and labour of man" (*Gray on the Happiness of States*). In the spontaneous produce there is no progression whatever. The artificial increase may be brought to its *maximum* in a very few years. If the amount of population be multiplied by 2 in twenty-five years, food, instead of being only doubled to keep pace with it, may be multiplied by 4, or 10, or 30. It would not, because nobody would cultivate the ground to raise provision for which there were no consumers. The capability of such an increase exists, nevertheless. But Mr. Malthus would ask, Is it always the interest of cultivators to call forth this capability? Perhaps not, sometimes, though it will be generally. But if not, the blame attaches somewhere else than to the laws of nature, which is what he diligently keeps out of sight.

A reference to the able work of Dr. Purves (*Gray versus Malthus*), from which I will make one short quotation, will supersede enlargement on this subject:

"His (Malthus's) own surveys, excepting those of regions inhabited by men who are not in the state of cultivators, are, in fact, all decidedly against his theory. Is there a country peopled by men who are in that state, in which there is not still *a great abundance of the means of additional subsistence in store?* Why, then, in the course of so many ages, has not population risen fully to those means of subsistence, or till it exhausted them? A deficiency of these means, of which there is a confessed superabundance every where, cannot surely be the cause.

"The result of the survey of the earth is this: *Throughout all her regions, for none of any extent can be excepted, after the lapse, not of hundreds, but of thousands of years, there is not found one in which population has at all approached the limits of the subsistence which it is capable of producing.* How, then, can it be possible that it is a general deficiency of subsistence which has checked the progress of population? The argument is brief, but it is perfectly decisive."

Here, then, we may quit Mr. Malthus. The difficulty started by Wallace still remains. A happy world would tend to become a full world. Wisdom and virtue, however, might long avert the evil; if they cannot enable man to avoid it, why, then, at last, come it must, —and so must the end of the world.

new principles operate. From amid this chaos order begins to arise; a gradual refinement takes place; arts, sciences, and philosophy rear their head, which, though in their imperfect and crescent state they may tend rather to increase the disorder, yet, when improved and perfected, seem destined to raise the human race to a condition much superior to that rude simplicity from which they had emerged. This improvement springs up, as it were, in the bosom of the preceding corruption, and for a long time coexists along with it. At first almost insensible, it prevails more and more, till there seems reason to hope that it may at last attain a very considerable ascendency."*

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* So much of the argument for the abolition of war and improvement of mankind rests upon the authority of divine revelation, that it is not needful, except as matter of speculation, to attempt to say how those great results will be brought about. Probably most theorists have attached a great deal too much importance to improvements in governments, and too little to the spread of knowledge, while Christianity, the most powerful agent, has been generally overlooked. Dr. Purves is an exception; and in concluding with the following admirable passage, in which he connects population, as a principle of improvement, with Christianity, I have only to wish that the "grand catholic doctrines" were already held so uncorruptedly in the countries which he calls Christian as to be attended with their genuine consequences:

"For several centuries, population has certainly accelerated the rate of its increase throughout Europe and that new-peopled division, America; but perhaps it may be conjectured on good grounds, that its progress has been slow throughout Africa and that old and thick-peopled division, Asia, if indeed, upon the whole, it has not been stationary in these portions of the globe. The increase in the two former has evidently been much more rapid since the memorable era of the Reformation, and particularly during the last century. That great event in the history of the human race in Europe, which it is probable will ultimately affect the destiny of the whole race, was partly itself produced by the civilisation necessarily arising out of the increase of population. The unusual stimulus created by the attainment of mental freedom, or *the right of private judgment*, which has produced so wonderful a change among the Protestant nations of Europe, and even, through their example, among the Romish, by making men depend more on themselves and their own exertions, has contributed materially towards the rapidity of the increase. And should the whole world ultimately become Christian, this change, with its necessary consequences in favour of liberty and virtue, would certainly also operate with wonderful power in favour of population.

"Nor is this event so improbable as some seem to imagine. Nearly all Europe and America are already Christian. Part of Egypt and Abyssinia professes a nominal Christianity, such as it is; and the

This process is analogous to what has happened, under the direction of Providence, with the mightiest cause of human improvement—revealed religion. It has been justly observed that in every state of it—Patriarchal, Jewish, and Christian—there have been, first of all, the institution, then the corruptions, and, lastly, the reformation; and that, "in each thorough reformation of religion, there is something raised above the primitive standard in the minds of its recipients; that men are generally prepared to enter more fully into the plan and spirit of it, to arrive at a more clear and complete discovery of its several ends and uses, than at its original institution." Thus evil exists for the production of greater good; death precedes a resurrection to immortality; and worlds are reduced to chaos, that nobler systems may rise in splendour from their ruins.

There doubtless appears, at first sight, in the history of man, a series of *vibrations*. Times of light and darkness, of freedom and captivity, of glory and degradation, have succeeded each other, in regular alternation, from the periods of earliest records. But instead of opposing the notion of gradual improvement, this fact illustrates the mode in which it has hitherto proceeded. The oscillations are not

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British establishments in Africa, particularly at the Cape of Good Hope, will in time christianise a considerable portion of that ill-peopled division of the globe. Australasia will be all Christian. The immense portion of Asia held by Russia, though as yet so thinly peopled, will be Christian also; and should certain not improbable events take place in Turkey, Christianity, under the auspices of Britain, and aided by British civilisation, will find it a less difficult task to extend her benevolent sway among the unreasoning bigots of the East, in whose minds mystic fancy and savage prejudices usurp too generally the place of sober sense and manly feeling.

"Christianity is fitted to be the religion of the world, and of the world in the highest state of civilisation. With the peculiar tenets of her sects I do not intermeddle. I leave these sects to adjust their peculiar creeds, each for itself, as well as they can. I speak of the doctrines held in common by all her sects: the grand catholic doctrines of men being all the sons of one God, all brethren, and all accountable to their Divine Father. Such a religion is suited for being the religion equally of the philosopher and of the peasant—the religion of mankind.

"It is alike favourable to the progress of reason and of liberty. The Christian spirit and Christian morality are calculated to make men what they should be. Even the statistician, who may view Christianity merely as a system tending powerfully to promote the happiness of mankind, without any reference to authority, will ardently wish to see it universally adopted" (*Gray versus Malthus*, pp. 157-160).

uniform. The pendulum swings each time through a lesser arch than before, till it stops. Not so, in its vibrations, is the human intellect. Far as it may have retrograded, each period of revival has seen it higher than before. On looking back, we see, therefore, a series of landmarks of the progress of man, confirming the proud hope of his indefinite advance; an advance now unclogged with many of the difficulties which have occasioned past interruptions, and aided by machines of more resistless power than have yet been put in action. To borrow a noble illustration: "The progress of improvement, intellectual and moral, individual and national, is like the flowing tide. A wave advances beyond the rest, and it falls back again: you would suppose that the sea was retreating; but the next wave pushes farther still, and still the succeeding one goes beyond that; so that by a gradual, and for some time imperceptible, but sure and irresistible progress, the mighty element bears down every obstruction, and, in due time, occupies its destined station. Even before the inadvertent spectator is aware, the soil and slime, and all unsightly and rugged objects, disappear, and the whole space is occupied by the beautiful and majestic main. Such, no doubt, will be the uncontrollable progress of amelioration, under the Divine government, till that auspicious era shall arrive, marked in resplendent characters in the decrees of heaven, and to which the golden index of prophecy continually points, when the 'knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the seas,' and the reign of truth, freedom, virtue, and happiness shall be universal and everlasting" (BELSHAM's *Plea for the Catholic Claims*).

And what to us, it may be asked, are these anticipations of a futurity which we shall never see? As to our perceptions, it must be unreal or remote as the fabled age of innocence and love, in which poets have entranced the imagination of young enthusiasts. What are these visions to us, bright though they be, in our circumstances, with our prospects, duties, and cares, with the anxieties and business of life about us, death before us, and eternity beyond? From such speculations of things, perhaps a thousand years to come, what solid good are we to reap of moral advantage, or social joy, or religious motive? What is it to us how the scenery may shift when we have left the stage, or in what glory may close the world's eventful drama? And why, we answer, should not the future influence us as well as the past? Do not ages and characters and events gone by affect our hearts and lives and destiny, our principles and feelings, our hopes and joys? These things have to us only a mental existence; they belong to faith and not to sight, and the revealed future is as certain as the past, prophecy as history, the end of the world as its creation. Indeed, history in general rests but on the testimony of man; while prophecy of the future is the testimony of God. The sacred volume began with history and closed with prophecy; they are the morning and evening light of the sun of revelation, which, in rising, shows us on the one hand the shadow of the past, and in setting, traces on the other the outline of futurity. We ought not to be unmoved by the one till we disclaim connection with the other, and, like the beast, live only for the passing hour, heedless alike of yesterday or to-morrow. The bare inquiry as to fact ought to command some attention and excite some interest. The inquiry is at least not less momentous than discussions on the site of demolished towns, the reality of recorded wars, the extent of vanished empires; not less than speculations on the result of this or that conflict, the fall of one power or the rise of another. Were it morally useless, it would not have been announced in scripture, which never gratifies man's curiosity but to mend his heart or to multiply his comforts. The human constitution has changed since Jesus wandered with his disciples by the Lake of Galilee, or taught upon its mountain, if there be nothing in these bright anticipations to inspire holy delight, needful consolation, moral obedience, and vigorous exertion. It must be useful, for it was revealed from heaven, taught by Christ, and recorded in scripture. What is prayer, when once we step beyond our own wants and wishes, but communion with God, in which we enter into his plans, and seek the accomplishment of his designs? What, then, is all we ask but a repetition of what he has promised shall be given? And why were the disciples instructed to ask, "Thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," but to intimate the will of God that such should be the final result; that, amid opposition and discouragement, they might not despair, but by hope be roused to incessant labour, and inspired with unfailing consolation? It is useful to virtue that pleasurable and triumphant feelings should follow in her train. Though truth and goodness shall have in other worlds abundant recompense and honour, though they are lovely here even in their lowliest ministerings, yet, so entwined are our feelings with the present state, so strongly does this world wind itself around the heart, that it is well not always to think of them as doomed to obscurity or pining in neglect, but as rising above opposition, and robing themselves in the majesty of spiritual dominion. None can deny the felicity of hope, and virtuous pleasure must be conducive to virtue. Thus God of old vouchsafed to invigorate his chosen servants. It was when the prophet pined in a solitary cave over his unavailing efforts against corruption, that the celestial voice announced the numbers who had not yet bowed the knee to Baal. It was when the beloved disciple languished in gloomy banishment, that heavenly visions depicted to his enraptured eyes the coming glories of Christianity. And though, if we include another state, this communication be not absolutely necessary to a vindication of the moral government of God, yet it makes that vindication more resistless, gives it a commendation to the heart, and transforms a satisfactory defence into a splendid eulogy. Whatever leads man out of self, unites him with mankind, and gives him hopes and joys of universal concern, does him good; it enlarges, expands, and purifies his benevolence, and is an advance from the calculations of individual interest towards the disinterested love of the Almighty. It is thus that self-love is refined into social, and the most grovelling principle of man becomes akin to the noblest attribute of God.

The motive to benevolent exertion thus gained is only inferior to that which arises from a future state of recompense. "If, indeed, there were no reasonable expectation of a future state of existence, it would, nevertheless, be pleasant and deserving of sincere gratitude to live, though but for a short period, in this beautiful and improving world; to behold the continually ameliorating state of things; to contribute our part, however humble, to the general improvement; to be, as it were, links in the golden chain of order and perfection; to leave the world in a better condition than we found it; and to enjoy by anticipation its future glorious and happy state" (BELSHAM). Yes, were this the whole of revelation, we should prize the record, and bless its author; we should say, Go on, ye friends of mankind, nor despair of success; the good for which ye labour shall not pass away from the earth, but be followed by a rich harvest of happiness; ye may descend into the grave, but no grave shall cover the blessings ye have earned for mankind; of heaven are the bright hopes and generous zeal by which you are animated, and heaven will secure their full gratification. But this is not the whole; it is only the preparation for scenes more glorious still.

We commenced these Lectures by noticing the analogy between the history of nature and that of revelation, in both which we see an original glory apparently defaced by evil, but that evil overruled to more abundant good: it is fitting to conclude them by observing, that both are parts of *one great plan*, conducted on the same principle, and extending to universal being. God is love; his dominion is boundless; his agency is that of omnipotent benevolence. Whatever be the aberrations of their course, from him his creatures sprang, and to him shall they ultimately be reunited, that he "may be all in all." For us, beyond the grave there is a better world. Earth must always have its imperfections and sufferings; and its happiest inhabitants will have cause to turn to that the eye of wistful expectation. Our fairest fancy of millennial glories fades and is eclipsed in comparison with the state where there shall be no death—where we shall form one holy and blessed community with the good of all ages and nations; and the gates will only close on that which would defile, embitter, or destroy. Then shall we pass on through successive eras of blessedness, each glowing with higher splendour, to that consummation of overwhelming glory, too dazzling to be steadily contemplated, when shall be achieved the final triumph of almighty love; when redeemed and ransomed multitudes, the remaining victims of evil, shall be emancipated from its last retreats; and, the darkest mind illumined, the foulest bosom purified, not one vicious impulse shall be felt and not one tear shall fall through the illimitable regions of the universe of God; but from all creatures in all worlds shall arise the swelling song of praise to Him, the *Father*, the giver of felicity eternal as his own throne, and boundless as his love!

THE DUTIES OF CHRISTIANS TOWARDS DEISTS.

A Sermon preached at the Unitarian Chapel, Parliament Court, Artillery Lane, Bishopsgate Street, on *Sunday October* 24, 1819, *on occasion of the recent prosecution of Mr. Carlile for the republication of Paine's "Age of Reason."*

> "Christianity stands in no need of prosecutions for its support."
> *Speech of the Attorney-General.*

[1819.]

PREFACE.

On the Sunday preceding the trial of Mr. Carlile for the publication of Paine's *Age of Reason*, having occasion to discourse on the account of the persecution of Paul and Silas at Philippi, I made the following allusion to what I could not but consider as an imitation of the opposers of Christianity in that transaction:

"And here I must be allowed to digress for a moment, to lament that the Christian name should have been sullied, stained, bloodily stained, with the foulest enormity of Paganism and Imposture; and that even here, in this boasted land of liberty, and now, in the nineteenth century, there should be Christian tribunals to whose bar the Unbeliever may be summoned to expiate his want of faith, or even his opposition to the faith, by pains and penalties, fine and imprisonment. The very fact is a libel on Christianity, and founded on a principle against which every one who values the character of his religion in the eyes of rational men should solemnly protest. If Deists will listen to you, persuade them; if they will reason, argue with them; if they write and publish, reply to them; if they misrepresent, expose them; but, in the name of Christ, do not persecute them, do not abet or sanction their persecution. Fine and imprisonment! What need has Christianity of such supports? What means could its bitterest enemies devise more foully to disgrace its name, more effectually to obscure its truth? It will never prevail with such aid. Oh, may it soon have 'free course,' free not more from hostility than from such fatal friendship; for then, and then only, will it 'be glorified.'"

Having thus freely expressed my opinion, it was my intention not to advert again to the subject, in the pulpit at least. During the progress, and at the termination of the trials, I found strong inducements to rescind this determination. The conviction of Mr. Carlile I had anticipated; but I had not anticipated the legal doctrines which were advanced to aid in procuring that conviction; and still more was I surprised and grieved at the feeling manifested by that part of the public which was allowed to be present during the trial, and by religious people generally. The decorous silence of a court of justice has sometimes given way to sympathy with the accused, but rarely indeed has there been a disposition to violate that decorum by audible expressions of disapprobation during a defence, or of applause at a verdict of *Guilty*. The common language of Christians after the trials, as far as I could observe and ascertain, and with the exception of a liberal minority, was that of joyous congratulation, as if a Waterloo victory had been gained over Infidelity. To correct, as far as I can, this improper and unchristian feeling, as it appears to me, and to inculcate "the Duties of Christians towards Deists," as those duties are taught in the New Testament, is the design of the following sermon; and as in that I have rigidly restricted myself, it may be allowed me here to make a few brief remarks upon the trial.

In the sermon I have taken for granted the legal propriety of the conviction; the pulpit was not the place for the discussion of that subject: to doubt it may be deemed presumptuous; but doubts I have, and why should they not be expressed? They may be resolved into the following objections:

1. It virtually rescinds the protection granted by the Legislature to Unitarians. The protection rests upon Mr. W. Smith's Bill, 53 Geo. III., which certainly was not intended, either by the introducer or the Legislature, to protect Unbelievers, according to Mr. Carlile's interpretation; but by which it was clearly understood that Unitarianism ceased to be an offence. According to the legal doctrines by which this prosecution was supported, and which are confirmed by the verdict of the jury, who "are judges alike of the fact and the law," Unitarianism is still an offence, and the liberal intentions of the Legislature in extending toleration to its professors are consequently defeated. It was contended by the Attorney-General, and allowed and afterwards maintained by the Court, that the Blasphemy Act, 9 and 10 William and Mary, made no new offences, but only affixed statutory penalties to certain acts which were previously, and still are, offences at Common Law. The denial of the doctrine of the Trinity is consequently still an offence at Common Law, and punishable, upon conviction, at the discretion of the Court. The Attorney-General did not leave this to be inferred by others, but followed up his premises with their legitimate conclusion, "that any contumelious attack on the Trinity would even now be liable to prosecution." The word *contumelious* is here only a "word of surplusage," for the offenders described in the Act on which the argument rested, and whom the Attorney-General was describing as still offenders at Common Law, are those "who by writing, printing, teaching, or advised speaking, shall deny any one of the persons of the holy Trinity to be God." It was also decided that to deny the truth of a doctrine was reviling, which is much the same thing as contumely. Now, if the Legislature designed to secure to deniers of the Trinity, by Mr. Smith's Bill, "the most perfect toleration," —and of this we have the testimony of the right reverend supporters of that Bill,—we must demur to the propriety of a conviction on principles which tend to defeat that design, and to place

us at the mercy of every bigot in the country. We have the shield of public opinion, as we had before. The prosecution of any sect of Christians is not a very probable event; but it should be understood that the principles of Toleration which protect us extend also to others with whom the public may have less sympathy.

2. That Christianity is part of the law of England, the Common or unwritten Law, has often been said; but I am not aware of any satisfactory evidence by which the assertion is supported. To try by a jury, to hang a felon, are parts of the Common Law, which we derive from the customs of our Gothic ancestors. But it was not a crime with them to revile Christianity. Preaching it might perhaps have been treated as an offence. If the Common Law be traced to a period anterior to Trinitarianism, Church-of-Englandism, Protestantism, Popery, or Christianity in any shape,—and to such a period trial by jury and the punishment of felony may, I apprehend, be traced,—it is difficult to conceive how it should afford any more protection to the believers than to the impugners of those systems.
3. If Christianity be part of the Common or unwritten Law of the land, it is to be presumed that it has become so in a justifiable, lawful, and honourable manner. The fact of its having become the law sanctifies the means by which it became the law. It establishes as a principle of the Common Law, that those means were not of a criminal character. Now the way in which Christianity gained this elevation was by free inquiry, by discussing and disproving the truth and excellence of the former religion of the country. Its success was therefore an establishment of the right to attack the religion of the country. This must be granted by the Christian, or he pronounces the first preacher of the gospel in England a criminal deserving fine and imprisonment. It must be allowed by the Church of England, or a similar condemnation is passed upon the Reformers who procured its substitution for Popery. Not only a general right of religious discussion, subject to limitations, but a specific right to attack the religion of the country (whether the use of that right be an evil or a good, on which, of course, the two parties will think differently), is implied in and legitimated by the fact that Christianity has become the law of the land in virtue of that right. To destroy it (and the conviction of Mr. Carlile for its exercise does destroy it) is to vitiate the title of Christianity to be so considered.
4. Christianity is a vague term; or rather, it has been rendered vague by the diversity of opinions held by those who claim that name in common. What is *the* Christianity to impugn which is a legal offence? To this question no definite reply has ever been given; and the fact is, that the reply depends upon the spirit of the times, and varies as that inclines to bigotry or liberality. Nothing is more common than for bigots to deny that name to those whose interpretations of the scriptures differ materially from their own. Let such men obtain even temporary influence, and a law so indefinite will

> "Give ample room and verge enough
> The characters of hell to trace."

On the other hand, when this indefiniteness is liberally construed—and it could not be more liberally construed than by the Lord Chief-Justice on Mr. Carlile's trial—it may easily be taken advantage of by the timorous, crafty, indirect enemy to Christianity, who is by far the most formidable; and the vengeance of the law only falls upon him who goes openly, bluntly, and argumentatively to his object. That is to say, it is not Deism that is punished, but honesty; not the insidious artifice that corrupts, but the open hostility that disgusts; not Gibbon, but Paine. The liability of a Deist to punishment is in exact proportion to the openness with which he avows and pursues his object, and in which proportion he may be considered as less culpable in himself, and more harmless to society. This is surely not consistent with laws which make evil intentions the essence of criminality.

5. If Christianity be the law of the land, then the decision of Christianity is final and obligatory, as to whether any and what punishment should be inflicted on those by whom it is denied and reviled. If the New Testament decides that they should be silenced, fined, imprisoned, banished, burned, then the production of such authority indubitably legalises those inflictions. Its decision is the very reverse of all this, as I have shown in the following sermon. If it be said that the directions which I have endeavoured to illustrate are for the guidance of private individuals, and not of public functionaries, I ask, where is its other code, by which they are to be guided? There is no intimation of the repeal of the general precepts, as to the particular case of their sitting in judgment upon Deists. If it be objected that Christ did not contemplate the adoption of his religion as law, I reply, 1st, the supposition falsifies the declarations of the scriptures, that he foresaw and foretold the future fortunes of his Church, and is therefore itself an offence, on the principles of the objector; and 2d, that if Christ only contemplated private duties, then his religion, framed on that foundation, is incapable of becoming the law of this or of any country. The distinction, therefore, completely fails, from its inconsistency with the original supposition. The argument upon that supposition I cannot state better than by quoting a letter from a most estimable friend: "We are told Christianity is the law of the land. Admitted. This is the only concession we need; for then the law of Christianity, the law of charity, kindness, forbearance, forgiveness, rendering good for evil, blessing for cursing, is *the law of England;* and then it follows, too, that these prosecutions are illegal because they are Antichristian."

Should it be urged that former convictions are decisive proof of the legality of punishing unbelief, and that the Common Law is to be interpreted by precedents, it may be replied, in the words of Blackstone, that "this rule admits of exception, where the former determination is most evidently contrary to reason, and much more, *if it be clearly contrary to the Divine law.*"

While, as an Englishman, I deprecate any limitation of the right of canvassing opinions, whatever those opinions may be, as a Christian I feel still more deeply the injury done to religion. As a

Unitarian and a Dissenter, I regret that the first prosecution should have been conducted by one who has acknowledged the former title, and the second by one who still claims the latter. There are many, however, whose faith and practice are described by those denominations, many also of the Church of England, who lament with me the glaring inconsistency of publishing appeals to reason in behalf of the divinity of the gospel, to which the objector replies at the peril of his liberty and property. Deism has spread widely in our country; no inconsiderable proportion of the lower classes are honest and open unbelievers; and a larger proportion of the higher classes are, I fear, concealed unbelievers, who, while they discard Christianity themselves, think it a useful superstition to keep their inferiors in order. It is proper and necessary that Christians should exert themselves to reclaim both these classes; but that very necessity and that propriety also require the unsparing rejection of all unhallowed means, of whatever may deepen prejudices, of whatever is alien from the spirit of their religion.

It was not easy to ascertain from the language held during the trials whether Christianity was considered as entitled to legal protection from attack because it was true, or only because it was established. Although the accused was not allowed to enter into reasonings against its truth, yet both the prosecutor and the court advanced a variety of arguments in favour of its truth, as if, notwithstanding their repeated declarations to the contrary, that were really the question at issue. The impropriety of trying such a question before such a tribunal is most glaring. If Christianity be only protected because it is established, then to assail any established religion is a crime also; and instead of its being a duty to "preach the gospel to every creature," it is a duty to preach it to no creature whose ruler has taken idolatry, or Mohammedism, or any other unchristian system, under his patronage. If the protection of the established religion be essential to the security of governments, then is a limit fixed to the diffusion of Christianity, and societies whose lists of members are graced with some of the highest names in Church and State are the enemies of social order all over the world.

I lament that Mr. Carlile by his defence strengthened the prejudices which before existed against himself, his faith, or want of faith, and his associates. Had he excited greater sympathy, my feeble efforts to abate those prejudices would have been unnecessary. Unitarians especially have reason to complain that, although he derived from their writers the most effective part of his defence, he was so continually guilty of the injustice of confounding their opinions with his own. Deists they certainly are, as Deist is opposed to Atheist; and so are all Christians, and so are all religionists. But though this may be the original and proper meaning of the term, common usage has restricted it to deniers of Christianity, which Unitarians certainly are not. He may have learned this calumny from our reverend or mitred antagonists; but this was no excuse for its repetition. So far as our opinions coincide with his, no fear of obloquy prevents their avowal.

With a brief statement of what they agree in, and wherein they differ, I conclude this preface.

Unitarians agree with Deists, and differ from the majority of Christians,

1. In rejecting the notion of a triune God, and of a partial or inexorable Deity.
2. In reprobating the priestcraft which makes religion the instrument either of public oppression or of private cupidity.
3. In maintaining the right of discussing freely all opinions.

Unitarians differ from Deists, and agree with other Christians, in believing,

1. That a series of revelations, confirmed by miracles, has been made by God to mankind.
2. That the Old and New Testaments contain an authentic account of those revelations.
3. That Jesus Christ had a divine commission, that he rose from the dead, and that he will come again to judge the world.

There are two points in which, generally speaking, the opinions of Unitarians are opposed to those both of other Christians and of Deists:

1. In asserting the importance of good works in their immediate connection with our future destiny, which is diminished on the one hand by a supposed indifference in the Deity to the conduct of his creatures, or the want of definite commands and authoritative sanctions, and on the other by the substitution of faith alone as essential to salvation.
2. In resting the hope of future existence upon the doctrine of the resurrection, and not upon the orthodox and Deistical notion of the natural immortality of the soul.

Hackney Road,
November 1, 1819.

Postscript to the Second Edition.

A reply to the following sermon has just appeared in the form of "Four Letters" to the Author, "by an Inquirer." The writer has not exerted himself to controvert my leading positions, but displays some dexterity in carping at detached sentences. A specimen of his logic, of his correctness, and of his candour will, with impartial readers, exonerate me from the task of commenting at length on his remarks.

He *reasons* from the exercise of miraculous power in punishing with temporary blindness a hypocrite, false prophet, and sorcerer (Acts xiii. 6-12), to the justifiableness of using political power for putting down modern unbelievers; and is of opinion that if the apostle Paul could rise from the dead, and behold an agent of authority manacling, incarcerating, and ruining them, he would say, "I set the example"!

He *asserts* that the language sometimes employed by unbelievers, which I have described as "vilifying Christ," "calumnious," "wounding the feelings of pious Christians, by insulting all they revere," and so "foul and revolting," that even to palliate it by the adduction of precedents would be a "loathsome task,"—that this language I "*can listen to with complacency.*"

His *candour* represents an admission that moral evidence leaves the *bare possibility* of mistake, as an attempt to "lead the young, the artless, the unwary into the temple of Deism;" and brands a condemnatory allusion to those who combine a hypocritical zeal against unbelief with an open disregard of the injunctions of scripture to command our passions, and not to take the name of the Lord our God in vain, as "a railing accusation against his erring brethren."

The "Inquirer" has not shown that Deists are excepted from the Christian law of doing to others as we would that they should do to us; and of the necessity of enforcing its application to our conduct towards them, his pamphlet is an additional and melancholy proof. How long will there be occasion for the Saviour to offer in heaven for his disciples the prayer which he offered on the cross for his enemies, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do"!

December 24, 1819.

"And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise" (Luke vi. 31).

This maxim is the foundation of the morality of the New Testament. We are bound, as Christians, to regulate our conduct by it; and my present purpose is to show in what way it should affect our behaviour towards those by whom the religion which we esteem of divine authority is disbelieved, attacked, and even reviled.

You will readily suppose that my attention has been directed to this subject by the recent prosecutions of an individual for the republication of Paine's *Age of Reason,* and of Palmer's *Principles of Nature;* and such is certainly the fact. If any have come, however, with the expectation of hearing remarks of a political or personal nature on the proceedings of a court of justice, or on those who presided over or were parties in those proceedings, they will be disappointed. I know too well the legitimate boundaries of pulpit discussion to enter upon such a field, and shall consider the subject only in a general view, as it relates to the regulation of your feelings and the discharge of your duties towards unbelievers.

It has long appeared to me that the liberality which has unquestionably advanced amongst Christians, and moderated the asperity of sectarianism, has by no means been proportionably extended towards Deists. Aliens from the household of faith, they have been considered as without the pale of charity. Their continued and almost solitary exclusion is not altogether unaccountable. Liberality has been increased by various causes in which they had no share. Missionary and Bible Societies, and a number of similar institutions, by bringing partisans together upon common ground, and uniting them cordially in the pursuit of a common object, have opened their eyes to each other's virtues, and removed a thousand prejudices which were the food of bigotry. But prejudices have only been removed as to the parties thus uniting and coöperating. While these have drawn closer to each other, the Deist has been left at his original distance. Unconcerned in the cause, or concerned only as an opponent more or less active, he has not been privileged to participate in the beneficial results. While the once alienated children of the Christian family were reunited, he, excluded from their social endearments, as unwelcome to their sight as ever, shunned by all, hated by some, stood far aloof, a solitary orphan. Even Unitarians—outcasts as they themselves are from the fraternities of reputed orthodoxy, and pledged by the character of their religious system to the most extensive liberality—have but too often been deficient in the duties which I intend this evening to state and enforce. Goaded by the calumny which would identify them with those who reject the Saviour, they have, in repelling so unjust an accusation, caught too much of the tone of their opponents, and given the most undesirable proof of their affinity to other Christians by that unfairness towards the disbeliever which does not become any Christian. However it be accounted for, I have a painful conviction of the fact, that Christians, as a body, do not in their writings, preaching, conversation, and behaviour, on public occasions or in private life, treat Deists in that way which charity should prompt, or even which is demanded by justice; to which, as fellow-men, they have a right; and which is by far the best calculated to win their attention, disarm their opposition, and correct the aberrations of their minds. This conviction has been much increased by observing the manner in which religious people were affected by the late trials; and the emotion, which would otherwise have been uppermost, of disgust at seeing Christianity under the protection of law-officers, and its insults avenged by legal penalties, was lost in regret that Christians could witness such proceedings with pleasure, applaud the verdict which pronounced open unbelief a crime, and find in the imprisonment of a Deist matter for congratulation.

I anticipate the misconstruction by some of my motives for making this effort, and am prepared to brave it. "Strike, but hear!"—the subject is of importance, and never did I enter the pulpit under a more imperious sense of duty. I am no sceptic as to the essentials of Christianity. Its truth is my trust; its evidences are, to my mind, most convincing; its moral loveliness charms my heart; to its holy precepts I would yield unreserved submission; in the removal of its corruptions and the extension of its influence I would exert all my powers and spend all my days; and its promises I regard as a sure foundation for the immortal hopes of man. Why is so divine a religion, invulnerable to the darts of hostility, wounded in the house of its friends? Why are not those friends more thoroughly imbued with its just and liberal principles?

Were it possible to forget Christians, and look only at Christianity, the astonishment which many pious people feel at the fact that there are unbelievers would be fully justified, and the low estimate formed of their minds or characters would be greatly palliated. If impartially weighed, how can the evidences for the divine mission and resurrection of Jesus be resisted? They leave, indeed, the possibility of error, and so does all moral evidence; yet on that evidence man continually acts without hesitation, and must, if he acts at all; nor is it deemed a valid objection, in any similar case, that we cannot arrive at mathematical demonstration. The variety, multiplicity, and cogency of the proofs of the divinity of the Christian religion place us on the highest ground of conviction which can be reached by this species of evidence. It is possible, but barely possible, that the predictions of ancient prophets—who announced the calamities or prosperity of various countries, who foretold the coming of the Messiah, the place and time of his birth, his character and conduct, the brilliance of his miracles, the purity of his doctrines, the severity of his sufferings, and the triumphs of his cause—were words spoken at random, and that, even though the history forms so striking a counterpart to them, all is to be accounted for by fortunate guesses and accidental coincidences; it is possible, but barely possible, that Jesus should form of himself a notion of the office of the Messiah completely unlike that which his countrymen entertained, and act upon this fancy, though certain that his imposture would bring neither wealth, honour, nor enjoyment, but hatred, persecution, and death; that his miracles were merely delusions, though his acute and bitter enemies did not attempt to deny or disprove the facts, but fully allowed them, and ascribed his powers to the agency of evil spirits; it is possible, but barely possible, that a clan of ignorant deceivers should frame a religion, with delineations of the character of God, and the duties and prospects of man, infinitely superior to what the wisest and best philosophers ever taught,—should propagate it at the peril of every thing dear to man, and succeed in establishing it in the world, in defiance of the opposition of priests and potentates, of the wise, the wealthy, and the powerful of that age; it is possible, but barely possible, that a system so framed and propagated should prevail over all hostility, and become the admiration of the wisest, the delight of the virtuous, the refuge of the afflicted, the source of knowledge, holiness, and joy to the world. But if this bare possibility be fact, how wretched is our condition! Where shall we look for truth? when accumulate sufficient proof? or, in the moral world, what solid resting-place shall we ever find? It appears to me, that we must admit such evidence, or we must admit nothing; must own no proof whatever, except that of our senses—if indeed that is to be excepted—and incarcerate ourselves in the dark dungeon of eternal scepticism.

Christians, draw not too hastily the inference that, if the conclusiveness of these and other proofs be not seen, it can only be attributed to the mental perception's being dimmed by the effluvia of a corrupted heart. He to whose sight alone the heart is open, who knoweth our frame, and remembereth that we are dust, can alone be qualified to pronounce such a condemnation; and to him much may be visible which you cannot perceive, productive of an effect so undesirable, without inculpating the individual. Nay, you may imagine various pleas which, in the judgment of charity, ought to be admitted, for the claims of an avowed and active Deist not to be ranked in sincerity and rectitude materially below an honest and active Christian.

Is there not in some minds an inherent and constitutional tendency to scepticism,—a tendency resulting from that physical organisation which combines, in some unknown proportion, with early association to form character? I would much rather believe that there is, than believe that every Deist in a Christian country is made hostile to truth by the love of iniquity; because it is not only more charitable, but more plausible. In every department of science and history, and where the love neither of virtue nor of vice could be gratified by the conclusion, there have been men who *could not* yield credence without a greater degree of evidence than sufficed to produce conviction in others. Amongst those who alike admit the authority of the scriptures there is a gradation of creeds, indicative of a variety of estimates of the evidence requisite to prove a doctrine scriptural. Even the most orthodox leave some few points on which it is allowed to believe or disbelieve, without the imputation of moral turpitude, and thus, in fact, admit the principle, that the conclusiveness of evidence may be modified by causes for which we are not responsible. To call this human frailty is saying nothing; for who is frail, he who requires the greater or the lesser quantum of proof? Each, the other being made a standard; both, compared with a third; all equally, in the judgment of him who, tracing variety in all the other works of God, believes its natural existence in the mental constitution of man. This diversity exists amongst the believers in Christianity, even as to the proofs on which they admit the divinity of their religion. Suppose those proofs could be represented by a given number, say fifty. That which produces conviction in one may be represented by ten; another requires twenty; a third forty; another, not satisfied with less than sixty, remains an unbeliever. More evidence would have included some who are Unbelievers, less would have excluded some who are Christians. But whether Providence had seen fit to give more or less, their moral characters would have been precisely the same: the Christian who, on the one supposition, would have been a Deist, would not have been less meritorious; the Deist, who, on the other supposition, would have been a Christian, would not have been less depraved. I could easily find amongst you two firm Christians, of whom the one had required twice as much evidence for his faith as the other. Does the latter attribute the total rejection of Christianity to depravity of heart? He is equally liable to the same charge from the more facile believer. No man can indicate for another the mathematical point at which culpable credulity ends, and culpable scepticism begins. He might as well profess to tell the depth to which a ball, with any given momentum, would penetrate into any substance, without knowing the power of resistance which nature has imparted to that substance. Nor can it be said that Christianity has exactly that degree of proof which makes scepticism criminal; for the external proof of Christianity, arising as it does from prophecy and history, must of necessity have been liable to considerable fluctuations, and is not in one generation or country what it is in another generation or country. And if it be asserted, that in all times and places it must have been powerful enough to overcome a constitutional tendency to doubt, unless strengthened by a vicious disposition, the assertion cannot be substantiated without a knowledge of the human mind which belongs only to its Maker.

Amongst the most extensive causes of Deism are the corruptions of Christianity, the diversity of opinions held by its professors, and the guilt and mischief which, to so enormous an extent, are fairly chargeable upon them. Here it is true that the Deist ought to distinguish; but what Christian shall condemn him for not distinguishing? Not the advocates of these corruptions, for they deem them the genuine gospel. Not the actors of these enormities, for they pretend to justify them by the gospel. The majority of nominal Christians are worshipers of the Virgin Mary and believers in Transubstantiation, and a still greater majority believers in the Trinity. The majority of nominal Christians for ages were persecutors in fact, and the majority are still, I fear, persecutors in principle. Who is to be condemned for taking their account of their religion, rather than that of an insignificant minority? But the books—he is wrong in not taking his notions of it from the sacred books. Be it so. I think in that he is wrong;

but while millions reiterate the censure, I cannot help saying, "Let him that is without sin cast the first stone." Is there no vilified religion to whose sacred books Christians have never appealed, to do it justice? Are not cruelties and absurdities attributed to Mohammedism in conversation, from the press, and in the pulpit, which a Koran from the next bookseller's shop would show to be mere calumnies? Is not the Hindoo religion daily stigmatised as a system of the grossest idolatry, while an appeal to its sacred books is in our language, proving that they teach the purest Theism? Nay, if nine Christians out of ten were asked whether the book prosecuted the other day contained arguments for the being and moral perfection of God, and a future state of existence for man, would they not answer in the negative, and do they not talk of it in terms only justified by that assumption? One fault cannot justify another. I am not vindicating the Deist; but if the same or a similar error be alike chargeable upon two classes, neither of them is entitled to adduce it as a proof of the depravity of the other.

That the great diversity of interpretations of the Bible, by different sects, should distract the mind of a man who never received from education, or has lost by circumstances, a preference for any one of them, and that he should think that the book from which professedly almost any thing and every thing has been both proved and disproved must needs want that clearness by which truth is characterised, I can very well conceive, without ascribing to him either stupidity or malignity. The consequent rejection does not appear to me more strange than many of the interpretations. The heretics who think Deists in a damnable error for rejection, should remember that the orthodox think them in a damnable error also for false interpretation. A hundred voices cry to the Deist, "Be a Christian, or you cannot be saved, and ought not to be tolerated." He asks, "What is Christianity?" They give him a hundred different answers, and each condemns the rest. Until we, Christians, shall approach somewhat nearer to unanimity, our distractions will operate as a cause of, and furnish a palliation for, infidelity.

Ecclesiastical history is full of foul and bloody deeds; the crimes of the corrupters of Christianity, of the men who have made its name the signal for desolating wars, the means of temporal or spiritual usurpations, the defence of oppressions and extortions, and the pretext for furious prosecutions. However these enormities may be mitigated, the Christian Church has not yet disowned either the corrupters or the corruptions, but continues, to a considerable extent, to fraternise with the one and symbolise with the other. While they do this, and yet allow the moral fruits of a religion to be its surest test, and appeal to that test on behalf of *their* Christianity, it cannot suprise us that those who look no further should disbelieve it, should shudder at it as the source of incalculable evils.

Without going further into this part of the subject, I will only observe, that the rejection of Christianity may be thrown into a series of propositions, every one of which propositions is maintained by some sect of Christians; and if each separately is not an evidence of moral depravity, neither can they be in the aggregate, which will be only a sum of ciphers. One Christian affirms that scripture teaches the doctrine of the Trinity, and another that that doctrine is a false doctrine. The combination of these assertions is the rejection of the scriptures. Some affirm that they claim plenary inspiration, and others allow that they contain reasonings to which we cannot assent, and assertions which we cannot reconcile. Here, again, agreement with both is fatal to the authority which both acknowledge. Opposition to all Christian sects in one particular may thus be analysed into agreement with each sect in some other particular. Their several contributions make up the sum of Infidelity.

It is right that the tone of censure which Christians are apt to indulge in should be moderated by the recollection of these inducements, furnished by themselves, to doubt and disbelief; and it would also be right for Deists to remember that, aspiring to the character of reasoners and philosophers, it ill becomes them to be hurried away by appearances into the prejudgment of so important a case. I would say to them, Why do you not distinguish? You confound persecution with Christianity; but it is not more evident that Christians have persecuted, than that in so doing they have been, not obeying, but grossly violating, the precepts of their Master. You confound a superstitious, mysterious, oppressive, political religion with Christianity; but in the Christian scriptures you will find the delineation of that system presented, not for belief, but for condemnation, coupled with expressions of wonder and abhorrence; its prevalence foretold and lamented, and its destruction identified with the establishment of the kingdom of heaven. You confound Christianity with the various books relating to it, and when you have shown, perhaps successfully, that some contain historical errors, or others unsatisfactory reasonings, or that others are deficient in evidences of their authenticity, you proclaim a triumph, as if you had destroyed Christianity; forgetting that Christianity existed before any of the books of the New Testament; that it is quite independent of the perfect accuracy and demonstrated authenticity of those of the Old Testament; and that the real question at issue is, Did Christ teach the resurrection of man from the dead, and rise himself in confirmation of his doctrine? which unless you disprove, you have just done nothing at all. That he did rise, has always been asserted by Christians, from the time that we can make out that there were Christians; and for a long period the assertion was made under circumstances which offered the most decisive guarantee for its truth, by men who had opportunities for knowing, and who had every thing earthly to lose, but nothing to gain, by their pertinacity. The calm discussion of their testimony is your proper task. This is the reasoning of Deism, while all else, in which, for effect, you have more largely indulged, is only its prejudices. If you can disprove this assertion to others, Christianity must fall, and ought to fall. If you only disprove it to yourselves, still this fair and reasonable course will destroy the suspicions which some feel of your sincerity, hurl back with disgrace the charges which others make against your characters, moderate the antipathy which many have to your writings, and if unhappily you must be persecuted, would strip persecution of the last flimsy veil which hides the deformity of her countenance.

Whatever be the conduct of Unbelievers, let Christians discharge their duty towards them—a duty most emphatically and beautifully expressed in the text: "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise."

This noble and comprehensive precept is universal in its objects, and definite in its injunction. It relates to our conduct towards *man*, be his station high or low, his colour white or black, his character virtuous or vicious; whether he be orthodox or heretic, Christian, Pagan, Jew, or Deist. Every man wishes the conduct of others to be just and kind towards himself; every man wishes not to be misrepresented, not to be persecuted; and every Christian who acts up to his religion will make these desires the standard of his conduct to others. The application of this maxim to the particular case of Deists comprises all I have to advance, either of censure or admonition.

Do justice to their opinions. You would have them be more just to yours, and complain, not without reason, of their identifying Christianity with various notions, some unessential and some opposed to it, merely because they have been advocated by men bearing, ignorantly, hypocritically, or unworthily, the Christian name. How common to confound Deists and Atheists, although the very names indicate a direct opposition, and there is the immense difference between their creeds of a God and of no God; a difference surely not less important than that between a revelation and no revelation. The great majority of them are also, I apprehend, believers in a future state. To talk, therefore, of their opinions dissolving all the bonds of society, destroying the obligation of an oath, and annihilating the distinction between vice and virtue, is mere declamation; it is the language of deception, of ignorance, or of bigotry. Even Atheism leaves the barriers of our natural sympathies, of habit, and of present interest; and what better defence, or what other, has virtue in the thousands of nominal Christians, who, while they are noisily zealous for putting down Infidelity, require a God only to swear by, and a hell only to consign to it the objects of their indignation?

Be just to their characters; and as you would not have them estimate Christians by the ruffian conquerors of Peru, or the merciless assassins of St. Bartholomew; by the avaricious priest who makes religion the pretext of plunder, or the crafty tyrant who perverts it into the machine of oppression; by the dreaming enthusiast, or the gloomy fanatic,—so pass not on them the sweeping condemnation they may not deserve, which the notorious guilt of some will not justify, and which the merit of others ought to avert. If the sincere love of truth and goodness; if just claims to the regard and gratitude of all around; if friendship the most disinterested and unvarying; if pious feeling, pure and elevated, towards the Author of nature, and philanthropy the most diffusive,—can form a title to high esteem, then have I known, well known, one instance at least in which it was due to an Unbeliever. There may be many such. If we take characters of rare excellence to show the influence of Christianity, and reject the million, why should they be decried from the opposite result of a different process? As Unitarians, we should remember Andrew Fuller's picture of our party; as Protestants, such tales as that of Luther's sale of his soul to the devil; as Christians, the debaucheries and cannibal feasts ascribed by the Pagans to the early churches.

Nor does it become us to hesitate in admitting, or grudgingly to praise, the good services which may have been rendered by Deists to the cause of human improvement. As members of society they have often done their duty, and done it well. In relation to religion there are two things deserving notice. He who saves a human mind from the dreary abyss of Atheism is entitled to the praise of Christians. Deists have written ably and forcibly on this subject. They are more likely to succeed in staying the flow of Scepticism towards this wretched termination than we are, as their reasonings will be regarded with less suspicion, and may proceed on principles less likely to be disputed; nor do I see why we should not both avail ourselves of their labours and applaud their object. They have also done much for Toleration and Religious Liberty. It may be doubted whether there be a country in Europe where that cause has not been advanced by the writings of Voltaire alone. True, they needed that liberty; and what religionist in every land does not, with the exception of the single party that happens to be dominant?

Many of the objections urged by Deists against the books of scripture, though far enough from disproving the truth and divinity of Christianity, are entitled to serious consideration, and merit a very different kind of treatment from that supercilious dismission, or violent condemnation in the gross, which they often receive. By candid concession, Christianity would rather gain than lose in real strength. That the early part of the book of Genesis is a compilation of ancient documents, and not the writing of Moses, has been the opinion of some most able divines and sincere believers. There are few, whose hearts are not absolutely cased in bigotry, who would not confess, did they speak out, that the extirpation of the Canaanites presents an embarrassing difficulty. Why should such things be defended, as if men's salvation depended upon the belief of them; or why should their exposure be sound criticism in the priest, and blasphemy in the Deist? Let them labour in this way, and I will thank them for it; for every exploded error leaves more stable the truth with which it had been associated. Instead of trembling for the safety of every sentence, fondly clinging to every forgery, or impudently vindicating every inconsistency, or, worse still, meeting argument by declamation, censoriousness, or prosecution, let us candidly admit where we cannot refute, calmly reply where we cannot admit, and leave anger to the vanquished and imputation of bad motives to those who are deficient in good arguments.

Suppose a Deist to be a prejudiced man—and I think many of them are prejudiced—is this such a crime as to alienate him from all the sympathies of society? We find palliations for the prejudices of our own associations, and so we may for theirs. If a man opposes Christianity because he identifies it with mystery, superstition, hypocrisy, spiritual tyranny, bigotry, avarice, persecution, I lament the want of more accurate attention, which has confounded things so unlike; but I respect the feelings which, in consequence of that mistake, make him its determined enemy. One of their number has justly said that, "though freedom from prejudice is one part of liberality, yet to respect the prejudices of others is a greater, and it is certainly that part which most contributes to the peace, comfort, and pleasure of society."

Even their language, foul and revolting as it sometimes is, may have apologies which Christians forget to make. For every abuse and misrepresentation a parallel may be easily found in theological controversy. They are a foul blot, but a blot which has stained the pages of men whom all delight to honour. As to such failings, charity should deal impartially, nor allow a larger license to the defenders than to the impugners of our own tenets.*

There is a sensitive apprehension about many good people, which ill beseems the man of enlightened mind and steady principle. "The Deist strikes at my religion." Well, he is only breaking his weapon against a rock. "He argues against the holiest doctrines of my faith." Does he? Listen to his arguments, and if they be valid, allow their force; if not, rejoice in a faith which will stand the test of reason. "But he abuses and reviles." Then he disgraces himself and injures his cause, and do you, with a better cause, employ nobler weapons. "In this he breaks the laws." So it appears. Ought a Christian to invoke the aid of such laws? I come now to the consideration of this question, and have no hesitation in saying, that he ought to have nothing to do with them, unless it be to raise his voice for their repeal.

What is the effect of prosecuting Deism on the individual who is thereby consigned to punishment? You make of him a hypocrite or a martyr. You confirm his worst prejudices, and make him hate Christians and Christianity. Penalty and imprisonment were never yet the means of sincere conversion. Man clings to the faith for which he suffers; his enmity rises with your inflictions. Is it a good deed thus to make the gospel hated? Or suppose his spirit shrinks from the fiery trial. You have then made a hypocrite. No triumph that for a good man to glory in. How does it affect his party? See, say they, how these Christians meet us; we argue, and they prosecute; we refute, and they imprison. What think impartial lookers on, or what the young, the undecided, and the inquiring? In the contest of force with opinion, we all know which way sympathy naturally inclines, and you have to answer for giving them this bias towards Infidelity.

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* Many expressions used by Mr. Carlile himself, or read by him from Deistical works, evidently excited the strongest emotion of disgust in the court, jury, and spectators. Yet any one acquainted with the writings of controversialists, not excepting even those of the present day, could not but be aware that, if the loathsome task were undertaken, it might be accomplished, of showing that every epithet of reproach, contempt, or abhorrence applied on that occasion to the scriptures themselves, has also been applied by professed Christians to those who differed from them in the interpretation of that volume, while they equally maintained its authority. Nay, some of his "blasphemies," at which so many shuddered, were the literal language of serious belief. Why should interruption, indignation, and horror be caused by his asserting that the Bible represented God the Father as dining with Abraham, when one of our most illustrious critics (Lightfoot) thus explains a passage in Genesis: "Some three months after this, the three persons of the Trinity dine with Abraham—the Son and Holy Ghost go down to Sodom, but the First Person in the Trinity stayeth with Abraham"?

Such prosecutions are a breach of the great principles of impartial justice and equal right, which are the foundation of civil society. The Christian has no more natural right to punish the Deist, than the Deist to punish the Christian. Persecuting laws, however small the number of persons in a state who are exposed to their operation, are an invasion of the social compact; at best, a usurpation of the majority over the minority, only to be vindicated on the assumption that power is right. We unite for the protection of life, liberty, and property, not for that of religious opinion. If the power to persecute be offered, you should have magnanimity enough to decline the unrighteous boon. Had Christians done this from the first, the gospel might ere now have been universal.

I would not have on record such a confession, a tacit and implied confession at least, of the weakness of Christianity, and its need of the aid of the civil power. That it is so may be disclaimed in words; why should it be proclaimed by facts? It is a libel on the gospel. That rock of ages needs no legal buttresses. If there be forms of Christianity which require that protection, let them be known for what they are—the reveries of men, and not the word of God; the creatures of the state, and not the offspring of heaven. Such churches are no stars in the firmament; their light is the blaze of meteors, ominous and deadly, and rapid as that of meteors will be their fall.

But it is urged that, though the gospel is above human aid, the poor and ignorant should be protected from sophistical and demoralising works. I know of but one way of protecting the ignorant, and that is, by destroying ignorance through the diffusion of information. The best defence against sophistry is not its suppression, but its refutation.

Danger from books implies ability to read those books, and he who can read one book can read another; he who can read Paine, can read the Bible. The New Testament, originally addressed to the poor, is a continued appeal to the understanding; its character is changed if you make it any thing else. It knows nothing of implicit faith or blind obedience, and to make them its substitute is gross imposition. By the toleration now allowed, the poor and ignorant, as they are called, are legally recognised as judges of the Trinitarian controversy, the Arminian controversy, the Episcopalian controversy; and surely not more ability is required for deciding on the merits of the Deistical controversy. Our Lord appealed to the poor on the divinity of his mission; and have we a less enlightened commonalty than Judea, sunk as it then was in ignorance and bigotry and barbarism? Men forget the progress of society when they talk thus; they forget what the art of printing, or even the diffusion of education and of knowledge during the last twenty years, has done for man. There are but two things which can infidelise the poor of this country, and these are, the obstinate retention of the corruptions of Christianity and the persecution of Deists. By those means, perhaps, it may be accomplished; for they, and they alone, will rouse the best feelings of human nature against the name of Christianity.

The feelings of pious Christians are doubtless wounded by insulting language offered to all they revere. Let them meet it by a Christian spirit. Nothing will show so well the heavenliness of their religion. Let them imbibe the spirit of the following beautiful remark of Robinson: "Is God dishonoured? Imitate his conduct, then. Does he thunder, does he lighten, does he afflict this poor man? Behold his sun enlightens his habitation, his rain refreshes his fields, his gentle breeze fans and animates him every day, his revelation lies always open before him, his throne of mercy is ever accessible to him; and will you, rash Christian,—will you mark him out for vengeance?" I fancy to myself a Christian who has abetted a prosecution for infidelity reading such a passage as this. Does not his heart sink within him at the incorrectness of the picture,—an incorrectness produced by his instrumentality? "No," he may say, "the sun does *not* enlighten his habitation; I have consigned him to a dungeon. The rain does *not* refresh his fields; I have invaded his property. His home does *not* smile; I have filled it with mourning. Revelation is *not* open before him; I have made him loathe the book, and done the utmost of a mortal to reverse the benignity of God!" Miserable man!

The conduct of Christ affords no encouragement for the protection of religion by power. Deists, to vilify him, and persecuting Christians, to vindicate themselves, ascribe his forbearance to the absence of the means. It is a calumny! If he had not political power, he had miraculous power; and had this been a righteous use of it, he would so have used it, and called down fire from heaven, instead of rebuking his disciples when they solicited him thus to punish the Samaritans. All his actions and his discourses contradict the assumption. The connection of the text, both in Matthew and Luke, is directly in point.

In Matthew (vii. 11, 12) it follows a declaration of the compassion of God. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father in heaven give good things to them that ask him? Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets." Some consider the term "therefore" as a mere expletive. I apprehend not. Can there be a more legitimate inference from the paternity of God than the brotherhood of man? We are told that Christianity is part of the law of England. However that may be, it certainly contains a moral law, of obligation on the believer's conscience, superior to all human enactments, and by it he ought to be guided in using or abstaining from the powers which those enactments may give him to restrain or punish others. For the case of Deists, "this is the law,"—the law of Moses, according to the interpretation of Christ; the law of Christ, according to every interpretation. No legislative authority can sanction or excuse the violation of this law by a Christian. In Luke (vi. 27-37), the connection of the text runs thus: "But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you. And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not to take thy coat also. Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again. And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven." Have these precepts become a dead letter? Has Christianity its obsolete laws? Surely, if there be any direction in the New Testament for our behaviour towards open oppugners, revilers of our religion, we have it here. Can we obey this, and institute or abet prosecutions of them? When I heard the disciple of Paine, in imitation of him, renounce the obligation of loving our enemies, I felt a momentary glow of triumph for Christianity. It was but momentary. I felt where I was, and what was going on, and grieved at the difference between precept and practice.

Admit the principle of persecution, and where will it stop? Allow it to Atheism even, and it will advance to Deism; allow it to Deism, and it will advance to heresy: and what *is* heresy? There is no medium in principle between the liberty of all and the tyranny of a particular sect. Christians, you kindle a flame in which yourselves may perish.

Look back to your own founders, your martyrs, your reformers: what you say of Deists was said of them; what you do to Deists was done to them; they outraged the feelings of the society in which they lived; they were condemned for the defence of the ignorant; they were held blasphemers; they were dragged as criminals to the bar. Are such recollections favourable to your reacting these scenes? What would an apostle say, risen from the dead, and led into your courts? Where would he naturally look for his fellow-disciple—on the bench or at the bar? How would he lament that all the sufferings of Christians by persecution have not taught its professors to sympathise with the persecuted, to abstain from persecution!

I am not addressing legislators; but you have your share in public opinion; let what influence you have be exerted for the promotion of universal religious liberty. The same principle, as to legislative interference, applies to religion as to trade. A celebrated minister of France consulted some eminent merchants, to know how he could best protect and advance the commerce of the country; their reply is worthy of adoption: it was simply, "Let it alone."

There is a more excellent way than prosecutions to convert Deists and counteract their efforts. Christians, make your religion more defensible; not in itself—that cannot be—but as exhibited in your opinions and practices. In your absurd creeds, in your rapacious claims, in your unholy alliance with the state, in your bigotry and persecution, in your tenacity of what is untenable, and in your want of practical conformity with the pure morality of Christianity, lies all the strength of Unbelief. That mighty change effected, which must come, when the reign of Antichrist is over, all hostility will be disarmed, and the genuine gospel, rising from the ruins of corruption, like the fabled phœnix in renewed youth from the funeral pile, shall spread its wings for a glorious flight, and urge its resistless course around the globe. The sword then broken, whether drawn for Christianity or against it, more celestial weapons, mighty through God, shall achieve the victory of Truth, and "in the name of Jesus shall every knee bow, and every tongue confess that he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

A FUNERAL SERMON

FOR

CAROLINE QUEEN OF ENGLAND,

Delivered at Parliament-Court Chapel, on Sunday, August 19*th*, 1821.

[1821.]

> "There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest" (Job iii. 17).

On many occasions have these words been quoted, but never perhaps more frequently, and certainly never with greater propriety of application, than on the present occasion. Caroline of Brunswick, Caroline of England rather,—for English was she by her station, English still more by her noble character, and English most of all by the adoption and affection of a generous people,—has left our shores for that final home where the wicked *must* cease from troubling her, and where alone, in her case, the weariness of unmerited suffering could sink to rest. A wounded spirit who can bear? And her spirit was wounded, even to death, by the poisoned daggers of calumny and insult. God grant that such weapons may be broken at her grave, and buried with her! And may the hearts of those who used them be moved by her dying forgiveness to that relenting mood which was not accorded to her living innocence!

How different is the sensation now excited from that usually produced by the death and funeral of those of royal rank! Very little indeed can generally be known of their real characters; they move in a sphere far remote from common observation; the variations and uncertainty of report cover with a veil of misty indistinctness alike their virtues and their vices; invention, detraction, and sycophancy are ever at work, in their different ways, upon greatness; nor have we any sure means of detecting their falsehoods, rejecting their additions, reducing their exaggerations, discriminating between their tales and that of honest truth, and making such allowances as will bring them to its dimensions. Even of sovereigns themselves, the goodness must be most energetic, or the wickedness most atrocious, to be clearly discernible to those who have only the distant glimpse, which is all the million usually obtain. Their connection with political events is a different concern; I speak only of their private character. They "come like shadows, so depart." The bells ring at their accession, and toll at their death. The first event is an occasion for merriment, and the latter a signal for being decorously clothed in sable. Then another face is seen at a distance in the next grand ceremony; another voice is heard at the next levée; another name or numeral is appended to the next public document; and that is all. They do not live amongst us, as she did; they are not accessible to all classes, as she was; their imputed offences are not publicly and solemnly and severely scrutinised to the very minutest circumstance, as hers were; the inmost recesses of their dwellings, their morning walks and evening amusements, their meals and journeyings, their actions, words, looks, are not, like hers, blazoned by observers, both friendly and hostile, for universal inspection; there is not with them the interchange of unprompted zeal and unaffected kindness which there was with her: and therefore (to whatever the difference be imputed, however unavoidable it may be, and connected with neither praise nor blame in any quarter) they can be little more than names to us, hung round with no associations but those of the public events whose course they chronicle; while with her we strongly sympathised, and for her we deeply grieve.

It is the necessary tendency of a limited monarchy to render the personal character of the monarch as unimportant as possible. He is identified with the state; he acts only by his ministers; his name is a mark of reference to so many pages of history; but his private feelings, dispositions, wishes, and conduct have scarcely more influence or interest than those of thousands of his subjects. In unmixed despotisms the case is widely different. There the personal character of the monarch is every thing. He is the destiny of his people, for evil or for good. He is to them improvement or degradation, happiness or misery, ease or oppression, peace or war, and his breath is health or pestilence. The degree of importance which attaches to the personal antipathies or predilections of a sovereign in affairs of state, affords perhaps as accurate a measure as can be obtained of the approximation of a government to limited or to absolute monarchy. The wailings or the execrations of a people may follow a despot to his grave, but a limited monarch can earn neither for himself; he is usually too abstract a personage for his loss to excite much real emotion; the history of his times is not his history, and though the one may be eventful, the other preserves its uniformity; and in a perpetual limited monarchy, dynasties of sovereigns may pass away, and all the emotion that shall grace all their funerals still fail to exceed that called forth in one day by the mournful close of the late Queen's varied but mournful history.*

More of a sincere and respectful sorrow than can usually attend a limited monarch to the grave followed his late majesty. His decent and decorous conduct in matters of religion and morality; his sturdy (though, in the opinion of many, mistaken) conscientiousness in reference to the Catholic question, on which, I doubt not, he would as soon have abdicated his throne as violated (in his own view) his coronation oath; his generous protection of her whose protector now is the grave; his long reign, which implanted a sort of regard upon habit, and made the present generation, who had advanced in it from infancy to maturity, and even to age, consider George III. almost as much a part of the country as its hills and rivers; and the sad affliction of his later years,—all contributed to touch the mind with solemnity when he ceased to exist. The honourable patronage, too, afforded by the Duke of Kent to many benevolent institutions, and the frequent and familiar association with the people to which he was led in their promotion, made his loss much felt. Yet in neither case, as to either the intensity of the feeling or the numbers who participated in it, was there an approximation to what has been witnessed now. The death of the Princess Charlotte, indeed, produced an awful and majestic burst of sorrow. The nation groaned in the anguish of lacerated affection and blighted hope. Still the public feeling now, distinguished from that on other occasions by its strength, is diversified even from this by a sort of gloomy satisfaction, by the melancholy consolation, that the life which has closed was a life so deeply embittered, and its prospects were so devoid of brightness, that the royal sufferer herself welcomed death with the sad cheerfulness of a broken heart; and, when Providence commanded, readily sprang into the grave, as her only place of shelter and repose, as the asylum where "the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest."

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* There is another circumstance which must ever tend to keep down inordinate sorrow on the demise of royalty; and that is, that royal virtues are generally as hereditary as crowns, and the successors of the best of reigning kings and favoured queens inherit not only their honours, but their goodness also. A royal race never deteriorates, at least in the professed opinion of those who take on themselves to be the organs of the public voice on such occasions. It is only as if the same immortal soul of goodness had evacuated one corporeal tenement to inhabit another. To the sorrows of Caroline there is no successor; may there never be, in the history of our country!

The text not only expresses in itself, with great precision, force, and beauty, the peculiar tone and character of the feeling with which the royal sufferer contemplated her approaching dissolution, and that with which her loss must be regarded by those attached to her; but this propriety is further strengthened by the circumstances in which it was uttered, and the connection in which it stands.

Job, the hero of this noble poem, may be regarded as a royal sufferer; for the scene is laid in those patriarchal times when large households were independent communities, and their heads were sovereign. Through successive ages has he been celebrated for his suffering; and the fame of hers has pervaded the earth, dividing men's interest with the convulsions of states and the downfall or restoration of governments; and endure it must so long as England has a history: his patience has often been appealed to for example, and her magnanimous endurance is the theme of admiration: he was spoiled of his possessions, and she robbed of the due honours of her station: the ceremonial uncleanness of disease, or its loathsomeness, drove him from his own house to lodge on the bare ground;

and the interested intrigues of faction and the pestilence of sycophancy exiled her from this country, an unhonoured wanderer over the earth: he could appeal to his diffusive charity; and for this too, when the ear heard *her*, then it blessed her, and when the eye saw her, it gave witness to her; on her came the blessing of those ready to perish, and *she* made widowed hearts sing for joy: he lost all his children, and that too while parted from them; and her exile was embittered by the loss of her only child: his sufferings are attributed to a being supposed to act as spy and tempter and false accuser; and in her case were spies and tempters and false accusers multiplied. His trials, and hers too, were repeated, the ignominious failure of each serving only to increase the severity and fury of the next. That endearing connection which began in paradise, and was designed to bless mankind, which ever ought to furnish security against the dangers of life, the consolations of sympathy and tenderness in its sorrows, and participation in its enjoyments, was in his case, and in hers, a source of disquiet and bitterness: he had to contend against those who had professed and appeared to be friends, but who vented calumnies and falsehoods; and so had she: he felt the baseness of those who flattered and idolised him in the season of prosperity, but who in trouble made him their song and by-word, and spared not to spit in his face, to offer unmanly insult; and so did she. Conscious integrity supported both, and prompted a defiance of slander, and an assertion of just claims to more honourable treatment: he offered sacrifices for his erring friends; and she pronounced forgiveness on her enemies: Heaven interposed for the assertion of his integrity; and, in the detection of the falsehoods vented against her, there were circumstances which—though, in fact, all events are alike providential—are eminently called so because they are unusual, and tend to obvious and immediate good: he was recompensed, as was the frequent method under the earlier dispensations of religion, by temporal prosperity; she was sustained (as is the more general case now) only by the hopes that fix on futurity: hence the joyous termination of his history forms a contrast with the mournful close of hers; and the deepest depression in his progress becomes the final earthly emotion of her bosom, namely, a heart-sick longing for that place "where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest."

The passage, of which the text is part, is a poetical and noble description of the grave as a place of rest, of refuge, and of equality. The subject has seldom been touched so finely or so impressively. "For now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept: then had I been at rest, with kings and counsellors of the earth, which built desolate places for themselves; or with princes that had gold, who filled their houses with silver: or as an hidden untimely birth I had not been; as infants which never saw light. There the wicked cease from troubling; and there the weary be at rest. There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor. The small and the great are there; and the servant is free from his master."

It is a state of *rest*. The eye in life not satisfied with seeing, the ear not satisfied with hearing, there cease to listen or to gaze; no more in this world to be dazzled with beauty or charmed with melody. The tongue of eloquence there has lost the power that could melt in tears, thrill with horror, and raise or quell the storms of passion. At the entrance of the tomb, labour deposits its load and authority resigns its sceptre. Avarice ceases to be anxious, philosophy to speculate, folly to sport, and misery to weep. Awful is the silence of the mansions of the dead, and impressive their contrast with the ceaseless noise and bustle of the living. There *she* rests—from her wanderings, her sufferings, and her conflicts.

It is a place of *refuge*. Job looked forward to that shelter from the assaults of hostile hands and the censure of evil tongues. It has ever been the retreat of the wretched; but, alas for those who leave the wretched no other retreat! So natural and powerful is the love of life, so rich and diffusive are the bounties of Providence, that, happily, situations are rare in which that cold asylum is regarded otherwise than with aversion. Yet there are instances: such are they whose hearts are riven by one mortal calamity after another; who have stood by the grave of friend, wife, parent, child; the treasures of whose soul have been thrown into that yawning gulf which renders not back its spoils; who are left desolate, or rather abandoned to the constant companionship of bitter recollections: such are they whom oppression grinds to atoms; on whose back the lash incessantly descends, on whose limbs the chain ever clanks; who toil and toil, but not for themselves or theirs; to whom *life* means labour, poverty, rags, and disease: such have been some of the noblest advocates of religion, and in the cause of religion, whom persecution stretched on its racks, buried yet living in its dungeons, or tortured to a protracted death by the lingering, writhing agonies of its slow fires: such have been some of the best patriots who have destroyed themselves in a vain effort to save their country; the evil eye of despotism has been on them for many a league, and its iron arm has reached them in many a country; but the spell of the one and the strokes of the other, though as fatal, have been less merciful than the scaffold, and they have slowly perished of ruined fortunes, disappointed hopes, abandonment, and vindictiveness: such was—the Queen of England.

It is a state of *equality*. Death is the universal leveller; he gathers into one promiscuous assemblage those whom once no earthly power could unite in fellowship. Here lies some ancient chronicler of generations, who long walked hand in hand with time; there, infancy which just opened its eyes to close them on the world, "no sooner blown but blasted:" here greatness, indulging yet the mockery of state, and mouldering in its last earthly house of marble; and there, the pauper's disregarded and nameless grave: here the turf covers one, the summit of whose science was to solve the questions, What shall I eat, what shall I drink, and wherewith shall I be clothed? and there it hides another, whose restless mind incessantly sought knowledge from man, from nature, and from books; who endeavoured to grasp the past and pry into the future; to trace both certainties and probabilities; and who seemed to realise South's paradoxical description of the human soul, that its rest is motion, and its quietness activity. Here lies the mightiest that ever injured with impunity, and there the most oppressed that ever endured in helplessness and hopelessness. Old, young; learned, ignorant; nobles, beggars; friends, enemies; relatives, strangers,—all forming one mass of earth, where in time their very atoms blend: and could we tell what once was theirs, the disorder would produce emotions stronger than touch the traveller in those wild scenes where the strange assemblage of all kinds and forms of substance makes him believe he sees,

> "Confusedly hurled,
> The fragments of an earlier world."

Oh, many are the lessons which the grave teaches, even though we look no farther than the grave. It should moderate the licentiousness of power. Well is it for the greatest to anticipate his lying down in the dust with the meanest and feeblest of those on whom he tramples now. The reflection may soften the imperious mandate, mingle mercy with the rigours of punishment, and hold back the arm of injustice and oppression. Death teaches charity and kindness; it shows the limit of our power to protect, console, or bless, and therefore urges to the exercise of all social duties. When those on whom we have inflicted pain, to whom we might have ministered happiness, have reached that bourn, repentance comes too late. As to them, there is no place for it, though we seek it carefully and with tears. It gives firmness to virtue, for there ceases all the power of its mightiest foes. Not shrinking from that, they may be defied and scorned; they can do no more; we are beyond all power but that of God, and he is just and merciful and good.

"There the wicked cease from troubling" is an expression which bears two constructions; either that there their victim is safe from their malignity, or that they themselves must, in turn, bow their heads to that narrow prison-house, and be stretched beside those who rest from the weariness of enduring their oppressions. The former I take to be the real meaning; but this, too, is an obvious truth. There the wicked and the weary mingle. There are persecutors and persecuted—inquisitors and their martyrs—Bonner and Cranmer, Calvin and Servetus. There are licentious tyrants and their victims—Herod and Mariamne, Nero and Octavia, Henry and Catharine. There are prosperous oppressors and murdered patriots—Edward and Wallace, Charles and Russell. There, a future generation will say, are Caroline of Brunswick, and—her witnesses, accusers, betrayers, persecutors.

But not to remain there for ever. There *is* a righteous Ruler of the world, and he will not allow the final scene of goodness to be disgrace and suffering, or vice to revel through life, and sink to the grave in a gorgeous blaze of triumph, with no corrective of the wretched lesson which facts would inculcate, were this the whole of human destiny. Nature and Providence indicate that hereafter which revelation emphatically proclaims, and which is satisfactorily ascertained by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: he hath "brought life and immortality to light." "God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance to all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." "All that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man, and they shall come forth: they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of condemnation."

One of the most striking and imposing circumstances in our anticipation of the last judgment is, the solemn award which will then be made on deeds, both good and bad, which were followed by no earthly retribution, because they were above the power, or beneath the notice, or beyond the reach, of human laws and tribunals. There thousands who held on a silent and lowly course of goodness, overlooked and perhaps scorned by the world, shall rise to glory, and shine as the stars for ever. There men whose benevolent exertions here only met with ingratitude and hatred shall have the erring sentence of their fellow-creatures reversed in their favour, and the measure of good which they would have meted to others shall be abundantly measured back into their own bosoms. There the base violator of truth, who scrupled not to sell his soul for the hire of perjury, will find the God to whom he appealed not unobservant of his crime. There perverters of justice from her even course will appear before Him who standeth in the assembly of the mighty, who judgeth among the gods of earth. There power, reckless of right, luxuriating and wantoning in the gratification of every passion, must look back with remorse to the unheeded warnings of religion—teaching righteousness, temperance, and a judgment to come. There the grave shall no longer be courted as a shelter from the troubling of the wicked, nor needed as a repose from the weariness of unmerited endurance.

The voice of candour and charity—nay, as seems to me, that of the sternest justice—warrants our best and brightest hopes at that bar for her who is departed. That she was innocent of the foul offence laid to her charge (and never did fewer honest and disinterested men, some such there were undoubtedly, dissent from a general opinion than on that subject) is saying comparatively little, as many are free from such offences who have small claims on respect; though it should be observed, that not once in an age is any one so completely abandoned to inducements to error. She had an active and vigorous mind, and she did not debase that mind; it was perhaps irregularly exercised and cultivated; but still exercised and cultivated it was; nor did she ever act more wisely, justly, and greatly, than when relying on her own decisions. Her greatest error during her last residence here, the rash rejection of the parliamentary grant, was caused by yielding her own conviction to the judgment of others. If in her manners there was somewhat of a foreign tinge (the inevitable result of education), which suits not England, this can scarcely be imputed as a fault; while the condescending kindness which marked them, even to the meanest, raises them into goodness. Her charitable disposition was not merely most unquestionable, but most admirable. It had the strength of a passion and the firmness of a principle, and blended beautifully with her habitual energy of purpose and action. In the very difficult situation in which she was placed in this country, where her rank and the aspersions on her character made it an imperative obligation to relinquish voluntarily no right, and where policy and duty alike warned against being factious or unnecessarily vexatious, her course was (in my opinion) guided by the soundest judgment and the correctest feeling. Her particular forgiveness of Louisa Demont was truly Christian, and this and other circumstances of her last illness which have been published, can have been read by few—I pity those few—without tears of admiration and regret. Of what her religious notions were I know nothing, nor whether her celebrated journey to Palestine was connected with them, or merely prompted by an honourable curiosity; but her conduct impresses with a conviction of her piety, and in her superiority to the fear of death, steadily for some days as she contemplated his approach, in her submission to the will of God, and her charity to all, even the most injurious, we trace the fruits of piety—such fruits as are better than a thousand professions.

It was her first misfortune, to be born of royal parentage,* and the sufferings which flowed from that source may well reconcile us to the humbler but more sheltered station in which Providence has kindly placed us. That misfortune, as it were, included all the rest, or, at any rate, was closely connected with them; for had not such been her lineage, she might not have become a wife without being the object of affection; she would not have been almost immediately cast off without the breath of imputation; she would not have been deserted by those who had paid court to her, and should have been her associates; she would not have been subjected to groundless accusations by sheltered accusers, nor have found acquittal ineffective as to many of the results that should have followed; she would not have been interdicted the society of her only child; she would not have been cajoled out of the country, where it was safest for her to remain; she would not have been a wanderer slighted by every petty government that thought to pay its court to a greater power by insult; she would not have heard at a distance of the sad death of the child who bore a motherless inscription on her coffin; she would not have had her assumption of the rank which had fallen to her menaced with the scaffold; she would not have had her house haunted by spies and her actions chronicled by calumniators; she would not have returned to her kingdom to be sheltered by the hospitality of a private individual; she would not have been a mark for unchecked malice; she would not have sustained the severest trial that ever guilt or innocence stood, and to which nothing but conscious innocence or downright insanity could have made her expose herself, only to find acquittal succeeded by nearly all the degradation that could have followed conviction; she would not have been turned back from even the sight of the ceremony in which, according to custom, she should have been a principal figure; she would not have expired without one relative near her dying bed; she would not (though of this happily unconscious) have been—— but of this last disgusting scene I dare not trust myself to speak.

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* In my opinion a heavy misfortune, in a moral view, on all so born. I enter not on politics. Sovereignty may be necessary for the well-being of society; monarchy may be the best form of government, the most adapted to provide for the security, the prosperity, the freedom, the morals of a people; and if so, it ought to be established and cherished. But there is a sacrifice to this good, a sort of moral martyrdom of the elevated family: the early sense of solitary superiority, kept alive by a thousand flatterers; the early perversion of the mind by those to whom ascendency over it is the great prize of life; the base readiness of many to minister to any passion, however base; the difficulty of making the voice of truth heard in palaces;—all are dreadful obstacles in the moral path of the high-born, which it must require extraordinary strength of mind, or extraordinary grace from heaven, to enable them to overleap. Alfred—every way the greatest name in our annals—was trained in the school of adversity; without such training, the vices of monarchs may almost be considered as their misfortunes, attributable to their stations rather than to themselves; hence their virtues claim eminent praise, and their faults unusual allowance. Let this allowance be made, where it is needed, and as far as it is just. The object of our present attention requires it not.

From recent transactions we may, as Dissenters, learn one lesson of honest gratulation, namely, that, whether by education or conviction, we are Dissenters. Our ministers, our congregations, our prayers, our devotional rites, of whatever kind, are not fettered by the influence and interference of authorities of which the first Christian churches knew nothing. The exclusion of the queen's name from public prayer, the maimed manner in which she was allowed to offer her public thanksgivings, the difficulty which, though only a delay, yet, in existing circumstances, operated as a prohibition of her, when dying, receiving the Sacrament according to the custom of her Church, are stains on the Establishment which will not be soon or easily effaced. Such events declare its need of reformation in a voice of thunder. They could not have happened amongst us; and to any attempt thus to control our prayers and services, I trust we should have virtue enough to reply, as the apostles did to a prohibition on a similar principle, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye."

Another lesson of some importance is enforced by them. I have often adverted to the *military profession*, and my opinion on its inconsistency with Christianity has gone before the public, in some measure with your sanction.*

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* In *Lectures on the Corruption, Revival, and Future Influence of Genuine Christianity;* Lecture VI., "On War," and Appendix.

Whatever may be the just rights of self-defence, whatever of universal arming and organisation may be allowed by the gospel to an invaded nation, it is astonishing to me that any one can read the New Testament and think its believers sanctioned in making the use of arms a profession, in giving up their consciences to a superior, and being accessory to the destruction of human life, without the fullest conviction of its strict justice and absolute necessity in every particular case. Such a shedding of blood as has just occurred (and though the instance is at hand and impressive, hundreds to which the same reasonings apply must occur in a soldier's life), though it may, for aught I know, be legal; though it may, for aught I know, be duty in the military sense; though it may, for aught that I shall argue here, be politically praiseworthy,—is what, I think, no Christian can lay his hand on his heart and say he would do—or that he would not rather be the wretchedest slave on the face of the earth than have the mortal responsibility of such deeds. He dares not, he cannot think, that any authority, any professional regulation, any legal protection, will be, at the bar of God, an availing plea, a recognised license for destroying a fellow-creature. For three hundred years Christian and soldier were universally held incompatible terms. What has united them? Certainly not a clearer understanding of the spirit of the gospel.

Finally, with far greater pleasure I remark, that the transactions of the last fifteen months are well adapted to inspire and strengthen a feeling which has ever glowed warm at my own heart, and which I would fondly cherish in the bosoms of others; I mean the love of our country—an admiring and ardent love of the people who really constitute that country. Next to the name of Christian, do I glory in that of Englishman. Not on account of institutions, civil or ecclesiastical; not for deeds of warlike prowess and extended conquest; not in any particular course of foreign or domestic policy; but in the national mind and character, as exhibited in the people, in the rich fruits of intellect and generosity which the soil seems to throw forth exuberantly as its spontaneous produce. These are England, and these are glorious. In such productions we may triumphantly compete with all the regions of the earth. In meaner things they have—and let them have—their various superiorities; but

> "Man is the nobler growth our realms supply,
> And souls are ripened in our northern sky."

Newton and our philosophers, Shakespeare and our poets, Milton and our patriots, are the real representatives of the people of England; they are the topmost billows of a mighty ocean, which has rolled, and will yet for ages, in spite of corrupting influences, roll on in majesty, of sound thought, and aspiring fancy, and noble feeling. The people of England are rarely wrong, and never deliberately cruel or unjust. Never perhaps has the earth borne such multitudes as have been repeatedly assembled in the last few months; and whom did they inspire with dread of outrage? None in reality, not even female timidity. And though affected fear cried out there was a lion in the streets, yet might childhood safely have thrown its arm across that lion's mane. It was not by pomp and show that they were congregated; for they turned their backs on the most gorgeous of exhibitions. It was not by any interested motive; for none could gain, and many might lose, by their devotion to an injured woman. It was a sympathy with one whom they deemed oppressed and innocent; it was a hope of serving and protecting her; it was a joy in her gladness and a participation in her insults; it was a tender veneration for her memory, the most honourable and disinterested and generous. These feelings are England for that period; they are its essence, and all else its accidents, and with these I would not but be identified for the world. Sovereigns may create nobles, and soldiers may win battles, and statesmen may enact laws, and hierarchies may make liturgies; but the people alone can pour forth such a swelling tide of noble feeling, to which the rest are but as the stones and shrubs among which Vesuvius rolls its resplendent flood of lava.

Soon—oh, how soon!—must these accumulated thousands become senseless as she whom they mourn, and be mingled with the dust on which future generations shall tread! We are bearing onward to the grave, and, in the path of duty, to a better country beyond the grave. But when they and we shall all have ceased to feel and act, the importance of what we have felt and done will still remain. It will remain as affecting the character, and perhaps the destiny, of our country; it will remain as affecting ourselves and our own final destiny. Nor, I feel assured, in the agonies of death, or in the awful anticipation of judgment, shall we experience one pang of regret at having thus paid our last respectful and affectionate tribute to the memory of Caroline of Brunswick, the injured Queen of England!

A SERMON,

Preached at the Unitarian Chapel, Parliament Court, Artillery Lane, on Sunday, February 16, 1823,

AFTER

RECOVERY FROM ILLNESS.

[1823.]

To the Parliament-Court Congregation.

My Christian Friends,—As the following discourse, the first which I delivered after the severe illness which incapacitated me for public duties from the 24th of February 1822, is printed solely for your use—for I shrink from offering to the public any thing arising so directly from a circumstance chiefly interesting to you and to my personal connections—I have ventured to introduce it by recording the resolution* in partial compliance with which it is committed to the press.

Some remarks were interspersed on the collection which followed the sermon, on behalf of your Poor's Fund, which I have been unable to recall with sufficient exactness to introduce. I mention this because many of you were absent on that occasion, who might have been contributors had the collection been made at the usual time, and to whom I would say, as to those who were present, that their liberal attention to that charity is the best and kindest welcome back to my public labours which they can give me.

With this exception, the sermon is as nearly as possible the same as delivered. It bears, I fear, very obvious marks of the state in which it was composed; and, were it designed for publication, I should feel it incumbent on me to revise it more carefully, to develop some of the remarks more fully, and to make it a more complete statement of the subject to which it relates. This, however, requires an effort to which I am yet unequal; and you will, I am sure, not only readily overlook its imperfections, but, so far as they are attributable to the cause to which I refer, will regard them with tenderness, and not wish them removed either on your account or on my own. They render the sermon a more appropriate memorial of the readiness with which, as reviving strength allowed, I returned to your service, and of the generosity with which you appreciated my first and feeble efforts.

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* At a meeting of the Parliament-Court congregation, held on Sunday evening, March 2, 1823, Mr. Teulon in the chair, it was unanimously resolved, That the secretary be requested to communicate to Mr. Fox the gratification experienced by the congregation on the occasion of his resuming a part of his public labours on Sunday morning, February 16; that he is hereby earnestly requested to publish the impressive discourse then delivered; and that we further urge this request as a mark of our sympathy with him in his long and painful illness, our sincere congratulation on his returning health, our sense of the value of his public services, and our ardent wishes for his early and complete recovery.—Richard Titford, Secretary.

If for any of you also days of pain and months of languor are appointed, may the consolations which I have endeavoured to delineate be multiplied in your experience: if you are spared such inflictions, may you be not the less sensible of the importance of those lessons of devotion and morality which they so forcibly teach; and may our renewed union in the house of God, by stimulating us to the discharge of our present duties, and gladdening us by the display of our future prospects, be instrumental to our final union in the abodes of uninterrupted and everlasting felicity! Such is the prayer of

Your friend and servant,

DALSTON, *March* 17, 1823. W. J. FOX.

It is impossible for me again to enter this pulpit without strong emotion. A few days more would have completed a twelvemonth since I last addressed you. The interval has, to me, been one in many respects of privation and suffering; but I must not forget, and I would devoutly acknowledge, that it has been far from devoid of alleviations, and even of enjoyments. It has furnished many occasions for grateful, and that is pleasurable, feeling towards the members of this congregation, both collectively and individually, and towards many unconnected with it; and especially has it been abundant in inducements, not merely to submission, but thankfulness, to Him in whose hand our breath is, and whose are all our ways. I hope now, in dependence on his gracious providence, gradually to resume the discharge of my duties in this place. May his inflictions impress on my own heart a deeper sense of the importance and efficacy of the principles which I here inculcate, and enable me to affect your minds in a similar way, and thus render them, by his blessing, subservient to our mutual improvement, that, as you have sympathised with my sorrows, so we may, here and hereafter, rejoice together!

"Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life" (1 Timothy vi. 19).

Or, adopting a more correct translation of one word, and probably a more correct transcription of another,

> "Laying up in store for themselves a good security against the time to come, that they may lay hold on the true life."

These words express the motive by which the writer enforces his exhortation to the rich, that they should not make their wealth the object of fallacious confidence, nor the means of selfish gratification, but so employ it as that when the casualties of life should deprive them of this resource, or the stroke of death demolish all earthly resources, they might look back with satisfaction on its righteous and generous application, and derive therefrom a pure consolation and unfailing hope. But riches are not the only nor the most important talent which men have in trust from their Maker, and for which they must render an account of their stewardship. Every faculty of body or mind, every advantage of age, circumstances, station, influence, comes under the same description, involves similar responsibility. The stores of intellect and reputation and honourable influence are indeed a far more precious kind of wealth than what generally appropriates that name, less corruptible and less corrupting; and with greater facility and force may their possessors apply them to the object of laying up a good security against the time to come. The gracious Ruler of the world, who has ordained that men shall pass by death from the present state to one of righteous retribution, has also provided all with materials to prepare themselves for that awful time; nor needs man more than the Bible in his hand and conscience in his bosom. Having followed their dictates, and trusting their assurances, he is well armed for the final conflict, well prepared to wrestle with death, and spurn the grave, and spring victoriously from its grasp to a glorious immortality. The preparation should be made, however, long before the emergency arrives. It is the work of years, not of moments. It consists, not in the pangs and resolutions and changes of feeling even of deathbed sickness, but in the long and patient efforts of healthful lives. And if it be obligatory thus to prepare for death, surely it is wise also to prepare for sickness, which, though in its more tedious inflictions it is far from being so universal a destiny, yet is sufficiently common to make it not improbable for any of us, and which, like death, is differently encountered by different characters; like that, also, requires a preparation which cannot possibly be made with effect if delayed till we are writhing in its fearful hold. How little, indeed, can we judge of probabilities on such subjects! Although far from well when I last stood here, and expecting even a temporary incapacity for these services, I was yet as much from anticipating such a lengthened intermission as has occurred, and attended with such circumstances, as can now be the healthiest in this assembly. To whose lot such endurances may fall, or when, no one can tell; but it is prudent in all to lay up in health a security against such times, especially as that security consists of habits and principles which cannot then be easily acquired, which are essential to comfort when such times do arrive, and tend most powerfully to the happiness of life and of futurity should they never arrive.

The infliction of pain and sickness, though belonging to the great question concerning the employment of evil in the Divine government, and partaking of the obscurities and difficulties of that unfathomable subject, has yet some peculiar and obvious advantages, which make it perhaps the least embarrassing instance to which we can advert. It is in that season of endurance that the Christian feels, to his inmost soul, the worth of those gracious promises about which, too often, he only reasons in the time of health: it is then that a more accurate estimate is formed of pursuits, objects, actions; that the false weights of passion and vanity and present interest are thrown out of the scale, and things are weighed in the balances of the sanctuary: it is then that the thoughtless are oft awakened, as from the dead, to sober reflection, and even the votary of vice feels new and holier emotions rising in his bosom, the harbingers of penitence and blissful change: it is then that qualities of sympathy and kindness are called forth in others, and the sufferer finds that, as God does not desert him, so he wills that man should not desert him either, but, in the very construction of his frame and essential principles of his constitution, feel an imperative impulse to compassionate, assist, and relieve: it is then that the meekness of submission, and the patience of endurance, and the unchangeableness of holy confidence, which the Christian exemplifies, give his character its last polish of moral beauty, and invest his example with power over the admiring heart, and plead the cause of his religion more insinuatingly than the blandest persuasion, more energetically than the most ardent eloquence, and often more successfully than the best exertions of his best days: it is then that by the apparent approach of death we become acquainted with his presence, attain all the previous experience that we can have of the awful moment of his triumph, and seize his dart to grave on the memory lessons of wisdom never to be obliterated: it is then, in case of that result which we call merciful (though all events, being under the direction of a gracious Providence, are really alike merciful and eventually felicitous), that strength is given to those emotions of devout thankfulness with which we exclaim, "Thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling," and resolve, "I will walk before thee in the land of the living."

A state of sickness is, then, far from one of unmixed evil, in itself, its circumstances, or its consequences. This conviction is not worthless as an alleviation; yet it acts rather remotely than directly. It cannot be always sufficiently present to the mind, or in sufficient vividness to counteract the pressure of affliction. It is rather the reflection of the observer than the experience of the sufferer. Some intermediate agency is needful to make it bear upon the victim of sorrow, and blend it with other means of alleviating his condition. I shall proceed to indicate these; first observing, that whatever their power may be, an ample field for their exercise is provided by the various emergencies of the state in question.

Yes, great and manifold and bitter are the evils of lingering sickness. The paroxysm of pain, when but one sensation is felt—the sensation of anguish—and consciousness is reduced to the consciousness of suffering; the weariness of tossing on a feverish bed, exclaiming, "in the morning, Would to God it were evening: and in the evening, Would to God it were morning;" watching the gradual fading of day into night, and again the gradual brightening of night into day, but without exertion in the one, or repose in the other; seeing inanimate nature pursuing its destined course, suns rising and setting, moons waxing and waning, flowers opening and withering; all moving, rolling on, and answering the great end of being without knowing it, while with us consciousness is only that of passive existence; hearing from afar the bustle and stir of this mighty world, where there is so much doing and to be done, and where even the weakest and humblest has his sphere of action, and ministers something to the sum of happiness and improvement; but hearing it only as if we were in the grave, and the busy crowd rushed by us or over us; the painful and humbling sensation of being not only a blank but a burden in society; the feeling of helplessness and dependence on others, even for the merest trifles, which only the tenderest care in them can make tolerable, and which no kindness can entirely repress; the weakness which ever forbids efforts to which imagination incessantly urges, till the mind sinks in its vain struggle with the infirmities of the body, shattered and exhausted, like the bird beating against the bars of its cage; the thousand anxieties about dear and perhaps helpless survivors, suffering in our sufferings, and orphaned in our loss; the revoltings of nature at pain, decline, extinction;—these are evils which require an antidote; the bare possibility of exposure to these should make the healthiest ask, How shall I support them? Banish not that question till the time come; it will be then too late. There are resources, but they must all be previously accumulated.

Attention to the acquisition of wealth needs generally no stimulus by exhortation here. It is our more usual and important task to show the evils of the ever-encroaching tyranny of Mammon; yet there may be some who are not improperly reminded, if on their exertions, and those perhaps not favoured by circumstances, depend the support of themselves and families, that sickness is not the season in which it is easy to provide or desirable to retrench. Mind and body shrink from their accustomed toil, and yet even more than accustomed delicacy of nutriment is required. It were wise in those who earn little more than daily food by daily exertion to regard such contingencies as having a more imperative claim for whatever can be gained or spared, than present indulgences or amusements. One's own prudence is better security than the charity of others.

The attachment of friends and associates is then most desirable. Their mere sympathy is soothing, and their kind offices are continually needful. Miserable is he who then depends on the mercenary aid of hirelings, or on the cold dictates of duty. Of that cup affection only can sweeten the bitterness. It requires an attention which no price can purchase, no authority command, and for which, independently of religion, the whole earth can furnish no adequate substitute. It is true, for want of the judgment which should guide, the patience to endure, the ingenuity to devise, the best and kindest may fail in rendering the services they wish; but without that affectionate interest, all must fail. Sickness, however, is not the time to acquire, but to try, regard. To accumulate gratitude by kindnesses, to command respect by estimable qualities, and conciliate affection by amiable qualities, is the work of moments more at ease, and of seasons of greater activity. Then must be hoarded in the hearts of others the supplies of love on which you need so largely to draw during the necessities of sorrow.

Books are then, to those who can enjoy them, a precious and almost unfailing resource. Those mute companions have a soothing language of their own, by which they speak to the mind and hold communion with the heart; they have not the forgetfulness which depresses, the monotony which tires, the obtrusiveness which disgusts, or the obstinacy which exhausts. They are instructive as the wisest teachers, faithful as the truest friends, subservient as the humblest slaves. There may we find congeniality with our every mood, from the lightest amusement to the gravest speculation. He who is addicted to reading is never alone —never forlorn. That taste may stand him instead of most others. He who forms it, hoards a treasure, and enjoys it in hoarding. It comes not merely because needed; it obeys not a fiat of the will; it is not the work of a moment. If reading be no pleasure in health, it will be no consolation in sickness; if it be not an occupation, it will never be a solace; if it has never been pursued as a duty, it will never be relished as an enjoyment.

Great is the alleviation of the evils of sickness by the habit of self-command. The endurance of pain, the conflict with weariness, and the degree of suffering which is caused by the nervous irritability resulting from a disordered state of the bodily functions, depend very materially on the habit of self-control. Without this, they are aggravated tenfold; they are assisted by the mind in their ravages, instead of being counteracted. But he who can suppress the fretfulness that struggles to his lips, who can set up a voluntary calmness against an involuntary irritability, who can summon all his powers to the task of patient fortitude, has a shield from which many a fiery dart falls harmless that else would lacerate and inflame his bosom. But the acquisition of this habit is one of the highest boasts of mental discipline. "Greater is he that ruleth his own spirit than he that taketh a city." Wait for sickness to acquire it! As well might the mariner await the storm to study the principles of navigation. Its formation is the task of years; its utility is the occurrence almost of every day.

But preëminently would I enforce the necessity of religious principle, which should insure all the rest, and which is essential to crown their work. Oh, wretched is he who, in that sick-room, which may be only the antechamber of the grave, is yet wholly unfurnished with this medicine of the mind; who has never thought of his nature, his prospects, his duty, his God; who has never applied himself to the enriching of his intellect with important truth, to the cultivation of his heart for holy affections, to the formation of his character in righteous habits. Wretched is he whose religion, however sincere his faith, is but a mysterious and terrific superstition; whose God is robed in the thundercloud, and his sceptre the destructive lightning; who gropes for evidence of the mercy of heaven in unfathomable speculations, or in the wayward changes of frames and feelings; who sees the grave yawning for him, and in that gulf a deeper still of never-ending anguish. Wretched is he who, disgusted with the credulity that devours any absurdity, has flown to the scepticism that admits no truth; who deepens the shades of futurity by the blacker darkness of his own mind; who, because it is not the illumination of noon, quenches the only torch that could light his steps through the gloom. The neglect, the perversion, the rejection of religious principles, alike rob the soul of the best security against that trying season. Then is it that faith triumphs. I mean by faith, not the mere mental act of credence in a proposition, but a firm trust in God, our Creator, our Father. This is the one thing needful for religious consolation. To know that all events are ordered by him, and that he is love, is enough for man to know for his support and hope. Give us but these principles,—and Nature, Providence, and Christianity teach and confirm and demonstrate these,—and you give us all. Death is destroyed, and the grave becomes the passage to a better life. When Jesus taught us to call God our Father in heaven, he poured a flood of consolation on the world.

Blessed are these principles even to him who then first feels their truth and power and beauty; who has lived without God in the world, and whose heart they touch, till he exclaims, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son:" but far more blessed are they to him who has long been practically familiar with them, and who then, when action merges in suffering, can look back to years of exertion under their influence and in their promotion. To him both the past and the future minister aid for present endurance. He anticipates the one with hope, because he can revert to the other with complacency. And still returns upon us that character of Christian consolation which we have marked in all—the need of previous acquisition: for as it is not when mind and body are both enfeebled that we can well apply to the correction of erroneous opinions or to the just balancing of neglected evidence, so still less can any change of feeling then be adequate to the retrospect of a virtuous life; still less can the hope of heaven's mercy then, though ever offered to the truly penitent, compare for a moment with the soul-cheering prospect of a felicity for the enjoyment of which the character has long been forming, and in the path to which the pilgrim has long been travelling, and the love of which has long been glowing in the bosom, and to the rational hope of which the soul has long been aspiring. All this must be done before, or it cannot be done at all.

Think not that our subject belongs but to a few whom Providence may single out for suffering. Should it be so, yet it may be you, who therefore neglect the only availing preparation. But remember that it is not merely a preparation for what you may possibly and even probably escape;

it is also the best preparation for what you cannot escape—for the thousand other forms of calamity by which you may be assailed, and from all which none are free; for death, which is your inevitable destiny; yea, for life, even life according to your brightest prospects, and fairest hopes, and fondest wishes: for who so well endures any of the various ills that flesh is heir to; who so peacefully resigns the existence which we but hold in dependence and on trust from our Creator, Lord, and Judge; who so wisely and usefully and happily employs the longest and most prosperous life,—as he who acts on lessons of prudence; whose reason rusts not in neglect, nor is perverted by abuse; who acquires the habitual control of his passions; in whose understanding the great truths of religion are enshrined, and in whose heart and life they bear their fruits of piety, righteousness, and peace? He really best enjoys what is good here, and he lays up an unfailing security against the time to come, by which, when mortality flits from his grasp, he lays hold on the true and everlasting life.

THE HISTORY OF CHRIST A TESTIMONY TO THE SOLE DEITY OF THE FATHER;

AND

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN DIVINE AND HUMAN PHILANTHROPY.

Two Sermons, preached on the Morning and Evening of Sunday, September 14, 1823, *at the Opening of the Unitarian Chapel, Young Street, Charlotte Square, Edinburgh.*

[1823.]

Morning Sermon.

My Unitarian Friends,—I sincerely and warmly congratulate you on the interesting event which has now called us together; an event alike honourable to you and propitious to the cause of Christian truth. If the remains or results of long-continued illness enfeeble and abridge my attempt to do justice to the occasion—and at best, oh, how unequal should I have felt myself to that!—you will bear with me in the conviction, not only that I speak from the heart, but that in this country, and in England, there are many, many thousand hearts responsive to every word I utter of congratulation, of encouragement, and of hope. They applaud by me your conscientious dissent from prevalent forms of faith and worship; the manliness with which that dissent has been avowed and acted upon, in very disadvantageous circumstances; the determination, as your prospects brightened and your resources increased, to secure more fitting accommodation for yourselves and those who might habitually or occasionally assemble with you; the perseverance with which your object has been pursued, and the prudence which has so happily insured its accomplishment, and in which you have given an example worthy of all imitation by congregations similarly situated. They also hope that you have thus done something towards opening a free course for the gospel, that it may be glorified. And it is well that in this country, and in this metropolis, such a testimony should be borne to truth as you bear, and for the progress of truth such a provision made as you make, by the erection of this building, which we now solemnly dedicate to the sole worship of the One God the Father, and the preaching of the gospel of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. It is well that here, where the Reformation was so much more popular in its adoption, vigorous in its spirit, and extensive in its results, than in England, an effort should be made to carry on that great work to the consummation, in which alone it can rest, of the revival of the genuine Christian doctrines of the Unity and Love of God. It is well that here, where learning and science have fixed their favoured seat, men should be invited to the knowledge of the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, which is life eternal; and to the study of the uncorrupted and unperverted scriptures, which make wise unto salvation. It is well that here, where unbelief is said, I know not how truly, to prevail among the intelligent classes, Christianity should be exhibited apart from those human additions and inventions which have marred its loveliness, degraded its character, embittered its spirit, and thrown a ponderous mass of incredibility into the scale against its evidences. It is well that here, where Trinitarian and Calvinistic dogmas have wielded so widely and sternly their iron sceptre, free inquiry should be roused to break their bonds and emancipate their captives; that to guide them out of the mazes of that bewildering system a beacon should be kindled and set on high, or rather, that the light of heaven should arise upon them; that to succour them under the gloomy inflictions of that system, the glad tidings of gospel simplicity should bring redemption; and that the banner should be raised in that holy warfare of truth with error, which allows neither peace nor truce till the Lord be King over all the earth, and there be One Lord, and his name One. It is well that here, where there must be many seeking for knowledge, you should provide for their instruction; where there must be many secretly convinced, to some extent, of the truth of your opinions, you should afford facilities for their open profession; where there must be many friendly to your cause, you should invite their coöperation. And it is well also that you should thus consult your own improvement, practise your own mode of worship, and assert your own faith, seeing that you are disciples of Him whose words, as declaratory of your duty, and expressive of your purpose, I now read from the Gospel of John, ch. xviii. ver. 37: "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth."

It is unnecessary to detain you with any discussion of the argument for the preëxistence of Christ, which some have derived from the second clause of this verse, as you will readily observe that their interpretation, by identifying its meaning with that of the first clause, ascribes to our Lord a very improbable repetition; and also that he had but a short time before employed nearly the same phrase to describe both his own mission and that of his apostles: "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world" (John xvii. 18). It is of more importance to notice, in passing, that the occasion of his declaring the end of his existence and mission was the assertion, or insinuation, that he aspired to temporal power and sovereignty. He repels the charge by avowing himself a teacher of truth, and Pilate accepts the reason, merely demanding in return, "What is truth?" *i. e.* What care I about your speculations or teachings, so long as you make no assumption of political authority? The professed followers of Christ have too often argued the matter in a very different way, and have inferred that *because* they testified the truth, they had a right either to possess temporal authority, or to have it exerted for their purposes. They have claimed, and that successfully, that as teachers of truth they should be vested with lordly titles, and rear their mitred fronts in courts and senates; that the people should be taxed for their support; that the stake, or when the milder spirit of the times disallowed this, that penalties and dungeons should avenge opposition to them; and that nations should espouse their quarrels, and armies fight their battles. This is not more alien from the reasoning of Christ than from the spirit of his gospel.

Christ bore witness to Unitarian Christianity. I assert this without fear of contradiction. He taught expressly every principle which we hold; and his followers, of all times, in all countries, through all sects, have borne involuntary testimony to the assertion; for not one of those principles have they dared to deny in words, although they have virtually denied them all by additions more or less inconsistent with their truth, destructive of their evidence, and hostile to their spirit. He taught and we hold the Divine Unity as the basis of revealed religion: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord." They deny it not, but assert a Trinity, which makes it unimportant and unmeaning. He taught and we hold the Divine Paternity, continually calling, and teaching others to call, God the Father. They retain the term, but restrict its relation to the second person of the Trinity, or to the elect, or by some other fanciful limitation. He taught, and we believe him, his own humanity: "Ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God." They allow it, but maintain that the man was personally one with God. He inculcated, and we practise, the worship of the Father: "When ye pray, say, Our Father." They say so, sometimes at least; but they also go on to say, "O God the Son," "God the Holy Ghost," or "Holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity." He taught the salvation of man by the free grace of God, in the parable of the Prodigal Son; and they interpolate the purchase of that grace by an atonement. He declared that virtue is the passport to heaven: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." They cannot directly controvert the declaration, even while contending for salvation by faith alone. He announced the infliction of proportionate punishment for offences: "That servant which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes." And they assent, yet make every sin infinite, and all punishment eternal. He anticipated universal benefits from his exertions and sufferings, announcing himself as "the Saviour of the world," and declaring that he would draw all men unto him; and they allow the justice of the description, and the truth of the prophecy, but reduce all to a few, and the world to a party. We take his instructions; we leave their unauthorised additions. We bear witness *for* the first, because they are God's truth; *against* the last, because they are man's inventions.

The object of worship is the topic to which our attention is especially directed by the present occasion. We adore the Father only; in the religious services of other Christians, the Son and the Holy Ghost are associated with him. For the worship of the Holy Ghost there is confessedly neither precept nor example in scripture. As to that of the Son, Christ is himself a clear and decisive witness. I have adverted, and shall again advert, to his language on this subject; but it is not my design to dwell upon particular expressions or detached texts. I appeal to facts; to his whole history, as recorded in the New Testament. This is the single argument which I shall urge. Those facts bear unequivocal testimony that the Father is, and that Christ is not, the only God and object of adoration. Let the inquirer take the gospels, and imagine a being conscious that he was the most high God in human shape, and ask whether the emotions and actions of Jesus, there recorded, were those of such a being, or not rather those of a man, placed in circumstances the most extraordinary, raised up and qualified of heaven to be the Saviour of the world? The answer, on a fair review of the transactions of our Lord's life and ministry, is, to my mind, obvious and final.

Whether the birth of Christ was miraculous, is of little moment. If it was, so was that of John the Baptist, of Samuel, of Isaac, and the formation of Adam, whom Luke therefore calls the Son of God. There are many weighty objections to the initial chapters of Matthew; and some, less forcible, to those of Luke; but they are critical, not theological. No doctrine depends on our regarding them as conclusive or inconclusive. Whatever were the circumstances, Christ *was born*. Even in the narrative most strongly suspected, that which is ascribed to Matthew, there is nothing calculated to impress on the minds of friends, relatives, or neighbours, that the infant was personally one with the Deity; that he was an incarnation of Jehovah. It was not till ages after that Mary was styled "Mother of God." What an expression! as if she actually carried Infinity in her bosom, gave existence to Eternity, and held Omnipotence in her arms! Modern Trinitarians shrink from such language, and well they may. Yet what becomes of their faith, unless the birth of Christ was the birth of God, and the mother of Christ the mother of God? At any rate, they allow that although Christ possessed two natures, he was but one person, and that person, the history tells us, was born. Tell any one whose notions of deity are above those of Heathenism, that you bring him an account of a person who was born, and he can have no hesitation in inferring from that single fact that the person in question was not God.

The narrative ascribed to Luke states that, in his youth, Christ "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" (ii. 52). Trinitarians say, "as to his human nature." The writer says no such thing; and the fact, unless so modified, is fatal to their hypothesis. If the human nature formed but one person with the divine nature, there could be no accession to his wisdom. From the moment of that union he must have been perfect in knowledge. That the deity gradually filled the humanity, as the latter was able to bear it (the explanation sometimes advanced of this passage), is a notion destructive of the doctrine of the proper deity of Christ; for humanity never could receive unlimited knowledge, nor the finite ever expand to the comprehension of the infinite. Is it said that the writer only speaks of appearances? And how came they to detect, under those illusory appearances, the reality which escaped him and his authorities? Will they argue that the growth in stature, recorded in the same sentence, was mere appearance also? And by what figure of speech could God be said to grow in favour with himself? Is it supposed that, possessing infinite wisdom, the youthful Christ concealed its extent, and regulated its exhibition, so as to manifest it gradually, like other children, and seem to enlarge his acquirements as they do? Had the writer meant this, he could have been at no loss for words to express his meaning. The supposition itself can scarcely be stated without reprobation, for it imputes to Christ a degree of management almost amounting to duplicity, in order to save the doctrine of his deity from instant confutation.

At the baptism of Christ, the Holy Spirit descended upon him like a dove, and the voice of God proclaimed, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Such a declaration is the language of a superior. It expresses approbation and invests with authority. By pointing out Jesus as the Son of God, or the Messiah, the Jews were commanded to receive his instructions. The descent of the Spirit was the gift of that which, had the Son been God, would have belonged to him before. He who expresses public and authoritative approval of another, intrusts him with a commission, and confers on him a donation, must be greater than that other. The transaction is demonstrative of the inferiority of the Son to the Father.

Christ was then tempted in the wilderness. Whether by the devil personally, or in vision, or by a human tempter, or whether the narrative be only a figurative description of his own reflections at that anxious and important period, I shall not now inquire. Whatever interpretation be adopted, still it was a *temptation*. There having been no witnesses, and the account therefore coming from himself, or by revelation to the evangelists, its description by that term is decisive. It was not only so intended, as when men are said to tempt God, but it was so felt, and rebutted by better thoughts and scriptural principles. He was tempted, not like as God is, but "in all points like as we are" (Heb. iv. 15); not in design or imagination only, but in reality. The record is one of human feelings, struggles, and success. Is it God that is to be threatened with delusion, bribed with glory, moved with hunger, awed by danger, that triumphs in resistance, and is cheered by the ministration of angels? In this sense God cannot be tempted; but Christ was, and was "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." Whatever be said of his natures, he was the subject of a trial to which Deity cannot be exposed.

He frequently engaged in acts of devotion, and sometimes retired for that purpose, when his object could not be (according to the explanation which has been given of other instances) merely to set an example to his followers. A praying Deity is an inconceivable combination. Why should *he* pray who was conscious of being the Lord of all power and might? And to whom? He had, at most, but equals. So far as his prayers are preserved, they are those of a man. Free as he was from sin, they contain not the confessions which we use; but in all else they show the devout workings of the human heart. They comprise acknowledgments of superior power and sole divinity in the person addressed,* praises for the gracious displays of his presence and favour,† earnest petitions for protection and deliverance, and pious expressions of filial confidence.‡ They show the ebbs and flows, the risings and subsidings, of human emotion; not the tideless ocean of infinity.

He always prayed to the Father; never to the Holy Ghost, never to the Trinity, never to his own supposed divine nature, which, if there be any truth in the position that he prayed as man, not as God, he surely might have done, and would have done, for the sake of affording instruction and example on a subject where they were most needed. If he received homage (rendered "worship," but originally so rendered when the English word, like the Greek, included various kinds of regard, religious and civil), it was not divine homage, for they who proffered it could have no suspicion of his godhead. He was, it is probable, occasionally present with the apostle Paul, who refers to petitions to him. And when Stephen committed his spirit to him, as the appointed reviver of the dead, he distinguished the act from one of adoration, by afterwards kneeling down in prayer to God for the pardon of his murderers. While he was personally with his disciples, either before or after his resurrection, requests could with propriety be made to him, as a divinely commissioned Teacher, which when he was taken from them would amount to worship; these, therefore, he solemnly prohibited. "In that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you" (John xvi. 23). There is then no scriptural obstruction to the fair inference from his conduct, which is only that we should obey his injunction, and when we pray say, "Our Father."

Man is not more distinguished by his form than by his feelings from those who are above or below him in the great chain of being. Many of these arise from his very ignorance, and are modifications of surprise. Others result from that infirmity which prevents his always having in mind the great principles which yet his reason recognises. They cannot be experienced by Him who knows the end from the beginning, and who does all things. They are only ascribed to him by a bold figure. The ascription of them to Christ is not of this sort, nor is it consistent with his being God. The very emotions, as felt by him, with their appropriate expressions, are matters of history. He "rejoiced in spirit" at the success of his disciples. He glowed with honest indignation at the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. He melted into tears at the grave of Lazarus. Individuals of peculiar amiability he loved; for the wretched he had sympathy. His soul was "troubled" and "exceeding sorrowful," as calamity thickened around him. The approach of death thrilled his exhausted frame with agony. On the cross he stayed his sinking mind by prayer. What ideas of divinity must those have who believe the individual who was conscious of all this to have also been conscious that he had created the world, that he was then supporting all things, and that his every word or wish was omnipotent!

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* John x. 21, xvii. 3.

† John xi. 41, xvii. 2, 26.

‡ John xii. 27, 28; Matt. xxvi. 39.

As a Teacher we find him asserting the sole deity of the Father, his own reception from God of wisdom and power, and his inability to do any thing of himself. Before his greatest miracle, the raising of Lazarus, he solemnly and publicly appeals to Him who heard him always—a phrase which intimates the fact, that on such occasions he always prayed. He taught any thing rather than his own deity; and when the Jews made his assumption of the title *Son of God* the occasion of a charge against him, he repelled it, on the Unitarian principle, by showing that the higher appellation, *God,* was bestowed in scripture upon human beings on account of the offices which they filled (John x. 34-36).

Go with him, Trinitarian, to the garden of Gethsemane; behold him there, appalled for a moment by the horrors of his destiny; appealing to his disciples for the consolation of human sympathy;* reiterating his prayer that the cup might pass from him; sweating, as it were, great drops of blood; and at length strengthened by an angel, and nerving his mind for the dreadful conflict. See him again, on the cross, his piety for a moment clouded,† but bursting to its wonted brightness as the lamp of life expired. See him entombed. Are these demonstrations of an essential and personal oneness with the Deity? Are they compatible with that doctrine? Does not Trinitarianism require not merely that sacred history should be written in other words, but that its materials should consist of another and very different course of events?

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* Matt. xxvi. 40.

† Matt. xxvii. 46.

We will not stop here. Proceed as far as the New Testament will guide you, and still the impression is the same. Behold him rising from the grave; but how? By the spirit of God, by the power of the Father. So the fact itself intimates; for on the revival of a dead body we naturally look for some external and sufficient cause; and so the sacred writers repeatedly declare. They confirm our inference. Who shall put aside these obvious and authoritatively assigned causes, to substitute their own reverie of his inherent deity?

He is honoured and exalted; by whom? God gives him a name, power, a seat at his own right hand, and a revelation* (which, therefore, he had not before), communicating that knowledge of the day of judgment which he had previously disclaimed,† and, by disclaiming, pledged his veracity to the limited nature of his information, and of course to the negation of his deity. It was the crucified man that was made both Lord and Christ.‡ The derivation of all his honours from a superior is a substantive part of the scriptural record of the dignity to which he is advanced.

High as that dignity may be, when all things are put under him, it is manifest that He is excepted which did put all things under him.§ When the loftiest praises are offered, it is to him that died, not to one that could not die;|| and in the final consummation of that dispensation of mercy of which he is the constituted head, the Son himself shall be subject to the Father, that God may be all in all.¶

And let him now be all in all to us, as the sole author of our blessings and object of our adorations. The witness of Christ's life and ministry to the truth of the sole deity of the Father is not more decisive of his claims than of our duties. Our lives also should bear witness to truth by firmness in its profession, zeal in its diffusion, and conformity with its requirements.

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* Rev. i. 1.
† Mark xiii. 32.
‡ Acts ii. 36.
§ 1 Cor. xv. 27.
|| Rev. v. 9, 12.
¶ 1 Cor. xv. 24, 28.

I. Be consistent and firm in its profession. Our religious opinions are no vague speculation, but the plain dictates of reason and of scripture. They rest not on niceties of language or learned criticisms, but are distinctly proclaimed by the voice of sacred history; and are embodied not only in the words, but in the facts of the New Testament. I see not how the argument from the life of Christ can be rebutted or evaded. It will not avail for the Trinitarian to reply, that, in the particulars adduced, Christ spoke, felt, acted, suffered, or was exalted, *as man;* for if that man were one with God, he could not have so spoken, felt, acted, suffered, or been exalted. The union with omniscience, omnipotence, and supremacy would have rendered it impossible. His deity is negatived, and consequently the sole deity of the Father established, not by the reading of a text, or the version or interpretation of a phrase, but by the spirit of the whole narrative. And as the evidence of this, our distinguishing tenet, that religious homage is due to the Father only, is most ample, so is the principle itself most important. It should seem, generally, I think, that in so momentous a concern as religion, it is the duty of every man, his duty to God and to truth, to avow his convictions. At any rate, Christ has decided the question for his followers. Other teachers and religions may allow temporising in dangerous circumstances; he makes no such allowance in the utmost extremity: "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father, which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father, which is in heaven." The duty of profession can scarcely be more obligatory as to the mission of Jesus than as to the object of worship. The latter subject involves—which the former does not always—the formation of separate religious assemblies. On very many points the frequenters of the same house of prayer may agree to differ; but as to this there can be no compromise. The Christians worshiped with the Jews until the latter expelled them from the synagogues; but with the Gentiles never. As to them, apostolic language was (and it applies to us; for whatever Trinitarianism be in itself, or to its believers, to us it most assuredly is idolatry): "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord." If Christ is not the supreme being, imperative as to our secession from those who adore him is the command, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Other Dissenters may have a satisfactory plea for separation, but ours is compelled by a paramount necessity. It is at the peril of the reprobation of our consciences, and the anticipated frown of our Judge, that we sanction, by word or deed, the adoration of beings who, to us, are no gods.

By thus openly adhering to the worship which he practised and enjoined, we best show our veneration for Christ. And he *is* the object of our veneration and of our love. Not, indeed, on Trinitarian, but on scriptural principles; not for possessing a divine nature, or for becoming incarnate, or for making an infinite satisfaction to avenging justice; but for enduring the cross, despising the shame, and bringing life and immortality to light; for proclaiming with his lips, and sealing with his blood, and confirming by his miracles, and announcing to the world by his apostles, the gospel of the grace of God, the Universal Father. Ill do we show our love or veneration towards him, if we rob the Father of the honours of his nature, the glories of his benevolence; or even if we tamely regard the prevalence of errors which have that effect; for truth requires of us—

II. Zeal for its diffusion. Justly did the Evangelist apply to Christ the language of the Psalmist: "The zeal of thine house hath consumed me." Christianity was originally characterised by its proselyting spirit. The Acts of the Apostles is a continued record of its inextinguishable nature, extensive operations, and wonderful results. In the minds of the apostles the desire of life seemed to be absorbed in the stronger desire of promoting the Christian cause, and the fear of death was overcome by the stronger fear of not serving that cause to the extent of their ability. The common apprehensions which, especially in despotic times and countries, must have been felt in their presence whose words were law, and whose will was fate, became as nothing; and a manly though modest testimony was borne, before the proudest of the powers that were, to the crucified one of Nazareth. The sneers of the learned did not abash, the fury of the multitude did not terrify, the mandate of the powerful could not silence them. Prosperity could not relax, nor adversity chill them into inaction. They sought out the scattered inhabitants of the wilderness; they cried aloud in the streets of the crowded city; they reasoned from the books of Moses in Jewish synagogues, and appealed to the sublimity of nature on the Areopagus of Athens. They wrote and preached and pleaded. They attacked alike the bigotry of the Jews and the idolatry of the Gentiles. In all stations, from the noblest palace to the gloomiest dungeon; in all countries where travel could bring or winds and waves could waft them; through all receptions, whether priests prepared the sacrifice to worship them as gods, or executioners bared the knife to sheath it in their bosoms,—they pursued the same object; their whole souls, indifferent to all that attracts, contemptuous to all that terrifies, bent on the work of proselyting the world to Christianity.

Was this spirit designed to be peculiar to their times and them? Should no portion of it descend on us, as believers in what we deem the pure gospel, so generally and so grossly corrupted? That Christ made its exercise the duty of his apostles, that they infused it into their disciples, that it became a distinctive mark of the religion,—these are all presumptions of its permanence, although undoubtedly different circumstances may render it improper. Whether they do so in this case, is best ascertained by the enumeration of those circumstances. That Trinitarianism is immeasurably superior to the licentiousness and vice of Gentile idolatry is gladly granted. Still, what is it, as compared with the gospel? In the confusion of its worship, its gloomy representations of the Divine character, and the repulsive terrors of the doctrines of satisfaction, reprobation, and endless misery, we see enough to rouse our feelings and animate our efforts. That we alike bear the Christian name and appeal to the Christian scriptures is an advantage that should inspire confidence, and not a consummation in which we ought contentedly to rest. We have not miraculous powers. Let us, then, diligently employ what powers we do possess. We are not exposed to the worst horrors of persecution. Then the timid need not fear, and the bold, meeting with fewer obstacles, may accomplish greater results. We have no divine commission; but we have the words of Christ, which were their commission. Of the difficulties, some may leave the question where it was; but some confirm the duty, and none are fatal to its obligation. Is it said, "Truth must prevail: let us leave its advance to Providence"? This might have been said then, and it would have been said in vain. How does truth prevail, how does Providence generally make it triumphant, but by human agency?—by the statement of its evidences, the illustration of its loveliness, the exposure of error, the excitement of attention, and all that indicates the spirit of proselytism? How was the Reformation achieved? How did Unitarianism revive? If truth in theology is to be left to itself, why not truth in morals, in politics, in philosophy? Why not abstain from reprehending the drunkard or adulterer, because righteousness must prevail? Why not let power unheeded trample upon right, because freedom must prevail? Why not bid the philosopher burn his volumes, stop his researches, dash to atoms the apparatus of his experiments, because science must prevail? Why not let misery perish, and withhold the pittance of relief, because charity must prevail?

In your manly profession of the faith that God is One, and God is Love, in opposition to those who, assenting in words, make by human admixtures the expression of those glorious doctrines little better than unmeaning sounds,—in the judicious, yet decided and persevering, measures by which you have succeeded in raising this temple to the Father of Christ, the Father of all mankind,—I read a pledge of your devotion to the cause of truth, of the spirit in which you will strengthen the hands of your worthy minister in his important and arduous work, and of your readiness to adopt all wise and practicable means to spread Unitarianism in your neighbourhood and country. God's blessing on you and him! And while the very fact of opening this place of worship will, it is to be hoped, do much to encourage the timid and fix the wavering,—while it will leave without excuse those who avow not nor act upon their opinions, and probably stimulate many to inquire concerning the sect so spoken against,—let me hope that it will also promote the discharge of that other and most important duty which truth imposes, of—

III. Conformity with its dictates. Without this, all else is but as "sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal." Here may love to God and love to man be inspired, invigorated, and extended. Preëminently favourable are your principles to benevolence, and closer than any other do they draw the bonds of universal brotherhood. Their influence in the production of this, the essence of all social virtue, I shall enlarge upon in the evening, and will only remark now, that not less favourable are they to devotion. To know God is to love him; and as all mistake about a perfect being must necessarily make him appear less amiable than he really is, the removal of such errors, and the dispersion of this confusion, tend immediately and powerfully to elevate devotion. Distraction and depression are the natural results of the notions of a plurality of divine persons, and of the vindictiveness of divine justice. They hide the truth, and, of course, obstruct and weaken, if not destroy, the feelings of pious gratitude which would spring up in its light. Above, heaven bends in benignant loveliness; and below, earth smiles in grateful and responsive fruitfulness, —like God and the heart of man; but the interposing cloud that veils the glories of the one casts a broader and deeper circle of gloom upon the other. From you that cloud has passed away. Soon may it in all regions, that to Him, whose right they are, the prayers and thanksgivings and hearts of his children may be restored! The services for which this building is destined are not those of vain forms, or slavish feelings, or sectarian narrowness. It is the worship of the Father "in spirit and in truth" that we would cultivate,—not only here, but in our bosoms, our homes, our lives. We revere him in all the spirituality of his nature, the immensity of his presence, the paternity of his character. The universe is his temple; the dome of heaven its lofty roof; the plain of earth its wide basis; sun, moon, and stars its glittering ornaments; every contrite heart an altar, every upright man a priest; and obedience and sincerity the incense that shall ascend to his palace and his throne, and draw down his gracious benediction.

Evening Sermon.

"Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another" (1 John iv. 11).

In the sermon delivered to you this morning, I was led by the occasion to discourse principally on that important topic, the object of divine worship, concerning which we hold opinions that separate us from those whom we love as fellow-Christians, and whom, were they not our fellow-Christians, we should still love as our fellow-men. I should not, however, do justice to the cause of Unitarianism, were the impression to be left that it is a system which tends more to divide than to unite, to alienate than to identify. The pleasanter task is now before me of endeavouring to illustrate the benevolence of its spirit, and the influence of its representations of the Divine character, by the adoption (which is made with peculiar propriety on our principles) of the language of John, the beloved disciple, the apostle of charity.

The text is an argument from piety to benevolence, or rather from the character of the object of worship to what ought to be that of his worshipers; from God's love of man to men's love of each other; and this is an argument interesting in itself, as well as adapted to excite our respect for the reasoner. It is conclusive in its nature, and noble in its very conception. It is a specimen of a good man's mode of thinking; it is the sound ratiocination of a charitable heart. I take it in the largest application, as belonging to the human race, although not disposed to deny that he might have Christians peculiarly in view. There is nothing in the love of Christians opposed to the love of man; nay, it was one step by which the mind was led and trained to the ascent of those heights of benevolence which command the widest horizon of kindly feeling, paternal affection, and common hopes. When the Jew learned to love his Christian brother, of whatever country, he had subdued a powerful prejudice, and annihilated the most formidable barrier which then existed to the expansion of the affections. The mission of Christ was the particular instance of the love of God on which John reasoned; but although that was only rightly estimated, and its immediate blessings were only felt, by Christians, yet as it indicated love to all his rational creatures, and will ultimately extend its mercies to all, the argument holds in the largest application. The lesson had been taught before, in the parable of the Good Samaritan, that man is our neighbour, whatever his country or religion; and the great rule of social life, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," rests on the assumption of universal brotherhood. The love of Christians is, indeed, included, as general benevolence is made up of particular regards to each, according to their merit, or their wants, or their relation to us as parts of the great whole. An impossible character was drawn of the enthusiast of whom it was said, that "he loved his kind, but hated his kin." The converse may be true. Selfishness may be extended, as it were, so as to embrace and identify with ourselves our family, or party, or country even, and yet no generous love for man may warm the bosom; but where that plant exists, these leaves and blossoms will burst forth upon its stem, and give it symmetry and beauty. The benevolent principle implies the selfish, in the best sense of that word,—in the only sense in which selfishness is allowable to the Christian.

The apostle asserts a fact,—that *God loved us;* enjoins a duty,—that *we ought to love one another;* and argues a connection between the fact and the duty, a motive or tendency in the one to enforce the obligation and promote the practice of the other, which it is our object to illustrate.

God loves men, or why did he make them? Who sets about producing that which he designs shall become hateful to himself? We should think the man mad who should busy himself in projecting and creating nuisances around him, only that he might afterwards destroy them, or suffer them to exist as long as himself, that he might be ever covering them with marks of his contempt and indignation. Such a design is altogether unimaginable. It is true that men's productions may often be annoyances to themselves, but this is never their plan—it is the defect of their plan; it is the consequence of impotence or ignorance. They want ability to realise their own conceptions, or foresight to anticipate all the results of their contrivance. Neither can be ascribed to the Author of our being. Our existence, therefore, proves his love to us. We *are,* therefore he loves us; for had he not loved us, we should not be, we should never have been.

Indifference to his creatures cannot be supposed, for it is inconsistent with the notion of a Creator. Indifference is inert; it moves not, it impels not, it accounts for nothing, but that nothing is done; and is incompatible with the fact that God has created man, and does preserve him. Nor can we ascribe hatred to God. Beings who are capable of hatred do not produce objects on which to gratify that passion. Hatred is connected with fear and feebleness. We cannot imagine it separate from injury received or apprehended. He who hates, could he have foreseen, and had he been able, would have made the object of his hatred a different being, or would have decreed his non-existence, or would effect his change. So long as we attribute such ability and foresight to God, must we hold him incapable, naturally and essentially incapable, of hatred.

He is omnipotent; his creatures can never become too strong for him; never less dependent on him than at the moment of receiving being. Therefore the objects of his original love can never become the objects of his hatred. His love is eternal.

This reasoning applies alike to all; therefore all are, and alike, the objects of his love. It is impartial and universal. I know this position may startle some who have been educated in a very different theory of the Divine attributes. They will see a host of objections. They will demand, What! does God love alike the poor abandoned savage of the wilderness, and the citizen of refined and enlightened communities; the slaves of idolatry, and those made free with the liberty of the sons of God; Judea which he blessed with wine and oil, and Egypt which he desolated by his plagues; the Cities of the Plain on which he rained down fire and brimstone, and righteous Lot whom he preserved, and faithful Abraham with whom he established his covenant; the good to whom he gives cheering promises, and the wicked on whom he denounces awful threatenings; the inhabitants of heaven singing in his smile, and the prisoners of judgment groaning beneath his rod? I reply, Yes; he did and does love them all, and alike; and such is the dictate both of reason and of scripture, though the one uses, as the other authorises, such terms as wrath, anger, hatred, vengeance, in reference to those of his dispensations which inflict pain, because such infliction is, in men, the mark of those dispositions, and it was needful gradually to purify the conceptions of creatures who began with thinking the Deity such a one as themselves. In this sense we therefore say with Paul, that "God taketh vengeance," not forgetting his addition, "I speak as a man."

What is the real difficulty in these cases? God afflicts, and therefore he hates, is most clearly not a general truth; for "whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth." In some cases, at least, therefore, it is a mark of affection. But those were the good—believers, Christians. Well, there are cases in which all must allow affliction to be a mercy, a blessing, a proof of love to the wicked; for how often is it the means of making them good—believers, Christians! No means of reformation is more common. And hence, to the admission that the afflictions of the righteous are always in mercy, must be added, that to some of the wicked afflictions are also a demonstration that God loves them. But does God love those who die in their iniquity, and rise to judgment and condemnation? I grant not, if their suffering be eternal, or end in annihilation; but if they be purified by it, then he does. That they will, I infer from the argument already advanced, to which these objections may present difficulties, but no part of which they touch as argument. That inference Scripture confirms, by declaring his love and paternity;* by treating the resurrection as a universal blessing;† by assuring us of the will and power of God to save all;‡ by promising a universal subjection to Christ;§ and by announcing the fact that the whole creation shall be made free with the liberty of the sons of God.|| Still, it may be urged, this shows his loving all, but not alike, as there is the immense difference of salvation after the few short years of an earthly probation and after ages of penal suffering. But is not the notion of compensation employed in all religions, all interpretations of Christianity? nay, is it not necessary to natural religion? Is not one great argument

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* Psalm ciii. 9, 13, 14, cxlv. 9; Eph. iv. 6; 1 John iv. 8.

† Rom. v. 12-21; 1 Cor. xv. 22.

‡ Ezek. xxxiii. 11; 2 Pet. iii. 9; Dan. iv. 35.

§ Eph. i. 8-10; Col. i. 19, 20; John xii. 32; 1 John ii. 2.

|| Rom. viii. 19-21; 1 Cor. xv. 23-28.

for a future state derived from the inequality of enjoyment here, the sufferings of the good, and the pledge implied in the Divine character that for those sufferings the good man shall have compensation? However long the wicked may suffer, if he be purified and restored in eternity, a point must come when his enjoyments shall, even to his own mind, balance and over-balance his past endurance; when, even if he had been innocent, there would be no impeachment of justice, as the evil has become much lighter than the good in his existence; and when, as to indications of the love of God, he is precisely in the same state as if from that moment his being commenced, and were always and eternally a happy being. To this may all be reduced; to the same thing as lives equally blessed, but commencing at different periods. If that be a difficulty, it is a final one; but it is surely no great difficulty. With eternity before us, it matters little at what exact point we start on the endless career. To me, it is none; nor at all detracts from the strictly impartial love of God to all.

That love takes various forms, according to the diversified position of its objects. To man, as such, it is the gift of existence, with his various senses and capacities. As the tenant of this globe, it appears in all the convenience and garniture of his grand and spacious and lovely habitation, which seems rather a palace for the sons of God, than a court for trial or the dungeon of punishment, which some depict it. As a social being, it environs him with the blissful and holy ties of parent, child, family, and country, and fastens a thousand gentle links upon his heart. It provides for those communications by which the discoveries of genius, the labours of diligence, and the lives of others become common property for delight and improvement. As a religious being, it affords sources of knowledge about God, and impulses to devotion, and the dictates of reason, and the teachings of providence, and the word of God, and the mission of Christ, and the assurance of immortality. As repentant, it takes the shape of spontaneous and free and generous mercy, blotting out the condemning record, and promising pardon and peace. As obedient, it encourages, supports, consoles, and animates, and leads through changes and trials to glory. In heaven it makes every power and circumstance and associate an agent for bliss. In hell it conducts the awful but resistless moral machinery by which obduracy is softened, and pollution purified. And in the promised consummation of all things it blazes forth, making the universe one mighty tablet on which to inscribe "God is love," in characters too resplendent to be steadily contemplated, and before which rational existence must bow in that mute and prostrate adoration which is all that remains to bespeak the overpowering boundlessness of his love, and the admiration, rapture, and intensity of our feelings.

Such is the apostle's fact. By this he enforces on us the duty of loving each other; that is, of rendering to all the peculiar services for which their station gives peculiar claims—reverence to parents, fidelity to friends, kindness to those who need, pity to the bad, esteem for the good, forgetfulness of injuries, the recompense of good for evil, and a lively interest in all that relates to the great family of man, showing itself in benevolent activity, according to our powers and circumstances. We proceed to notice some of the various ways in which the fact bears upon the duty, and either makes it imperative on the conscience or renders it easy in the performance.

1. *It is generally true that the mere exhibition of excellence disposes the observer to imitation.* The chief exceptions to this maxim are when the excellence, though existing and sufficiently evident to an impartial or competent judge, is yet not perceived or appreciated; or when there is a consciousness of incapability so discouraging as to paralyse; or a pride so great as only to be content with an impossible rivalry; or such a devotion to other pursuits as to deter from the attempt. Some analogy with these exceptions unhappily holds in religion; as, though moral good should be man's great object, he often forsakes the fountain of life to hew out broken cisterns, and busies himself about any thing but that which is the proper business of an heir of immortality. And there are, too, those whose thoughts rarely rise to the contemplation of the best of beings, who look at his glory but through their own darkened fancies, seeing little to love or admire, and who, therefore, are comparatively unaffected by that which, though at best we behold but as in a glass, should and might "change us into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

Benevolence of the purest and highest order, that active good will which is in the largest sense disinterested, can only be diffused in one way—by its practical exhibition. It admits not of the application of hopes and fears, rewards and punishments. And in this way it is presented, and a kindred feeling excited. The best artists have been sometimes formed by the admiring contemplation of former works of art. The flash of intellect has kindled congenial fires. The record of eminent philanthropists has created similar enthusiasm. And when we regard the providence and plans of God, his works of nature and of grace, his sun shining on the good and on the evil, his tender mercies over all, his patience, forbearance, and long-suffering, his kindness to the unthankful, his rich forgiveness and anticipatory welcome of the returning prodigal, the flowers with which he has strewn our path, and the hopes that beam along our course, the encouragements of obedience and consolations of affliction, the heaven of the righteous, and the benignant provision for chastising offenders; when, gathering from his ways what he is in himself, we adopt the glorious language of scripture, that "he is the Father, he is love," we surely cannot remain wrapped in self, or think only of what He has done for *us* peculiarly, or admire his boundless benignity, without a corresponding overflow of love, like his, to our fellows. How can we see him as he is, and not be like him?

2. *The imitation of God is a Christian duty.* "Be ye followers of God as dear children, and walk in love." "Be ye perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect." And how? "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven." We cannot imitate God without loving and doing good to man. The oppressor does not imitate him; righteousness and mercy are the pillars of his throne. The persecutor does not imitate him; He strikes not the heretic or the unbeliever. The conqueror does not imitate God; He wages no war even on his enemies by wicked works, or the souls would perish before him which he has made. The selfish man does not imitate him; He forms worlds for his creatures' habitation, not his own, and their good is his glory. It was in going

about doing good continually, with superhuman powers, that Christ was the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person. The obligation to imitate him is one link between his and our love to man.

3. *The condition on which he blesses each is solicitude for the well-being of the whole.* The very title of our possession is a readiness to distribute. "Freely ye have received, freely give," is the charter of our privileges. The more he has evidently loved us, the more his love has been shown in his bounties, just so much the more are we bound to exert ourselves in relieving the wants, dispelling the ignorance, and promoting the happiness of others. The man who lives only for himself is a usurper and a robber; he takes advantage of a trust which he does not execute, and grasps a bestowment of which he discharges not the conditions. "God giveth liberally to all men, and upbraideth not," but he requires of them to give to each other. We are pensioners on his bounty, and this is the tenure of our pension. "What hast thou that thou didst not receive?" Not talent, not wealth, not the advantages of science, not the benefits of society, not the blessings of the gospel, not the hope of immortality. "Thou camest naked into the world;" and with these has mercy endowed thee, that thou mightest do good in the world. If the gifts be large, large also is the return commanded of benevolence to others.

4. *The usual expression of divine love is the relation of parent to us, and to all, which implies our fraternal relation to one another.* "Have we not all one Father?" and are we not then brethren? Formed of one blood, wherever dwelling on the face of the earth, his condescending beneficence constitutes us one family, in spite of every diversity. It is not the worshiping by other forms, believing in a different creed, or even having, in imagination, another God; it is not the strange sounds of other tongues, or forms of other garbs; it is not the hereditary hostility which selfish policy fosters, and by which ambition makes men tools for its destructive purposes; it is not diversity of colour or of climate; it is not any or all the varieties which nature, or art, or time, have made in man,—that should have power to break this holy bond. Our brotherhood can have no just limits but those of the Divine Paternity; and where are

those limits? Not in the mountains or the ocean, not in parallels of latitude or longitude, not in the east or the west, not in Judea or in Christendom, not in faith or unbelief, not in Unitarianism or idolatry; they are not in mind or body, time or place, so long as aught human is different or beyond. On whomsoever his sun shines should the light of our love beam; and wherever, on human dwellings, his rain descends, should the dews of our affection fall. All that discriminates is less than that which unites. Nature around us, and within us, is common; the air, and earth, and sun, and sky; senses, mind, and heart; and his love the source and sum of all. When shall this union triumph over the pride, folly, craft, selfishness, and ambition that have made man the agent of so much misery to man?

5. *The object of his love in the gospel* (alluded to by John) *is to excite, enlarge, and strengthen this mutual affection.* We enter not into the design of Christianity unless we strive for its advancement. We know not what spirit we are of unless this inspire us. Our faith is dead if it work not by love. We may be very correct as to religious doctrines, and scrupulous as to forms, and punctual as to services; but if this be absent, in the Christian estimate we are nothing. Christianity harmoniously combines with "glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good will towards men." If the love of God be "shed abroad in our hearts," love to man will spring up out of them. Such were its first-fruits, and such must be its harvest. In infancy it threw down the barrier that separated Jew and Gentile; it fed from the same table, and supported on the common stock, those who for ages had had no dealings with each other; it mastered avarice, and trampled on pride, and exiled prejudice, and subdued passion; and in the days of its reviving strength and glory, in the power of its resurrection from the grave of corruption, it shall be the fellowship of nations and the pacification of the world. Like the lightning, it shall shine from one end of heaven to the other; but it will be to enlighten and not to blast. Like the sea, it shall flow from shore to shore; but it will be to identify and not to divide. These are its aim. As these feelings are generated in its disciples, its work is done, and only then. This is the reign of Christ on earth.

6. *If God, the pure and infinite spirit, loves man, much more should we, brethren in infirmity and sin, love each other,* is another way in which the argument may be put. How must the delusive pleas of indifference vanish, when the benignity of heaven to all is thus contrasted! Man, why lovest thou not thy brother? Is it that he is inferior in station? Let him be the slave of slaves, and be thou the king of kings, how much nearer is thy rank, or nobility, or regality, to the throne of God? To thee the eternal majesty of heaven must bend as low in love as it does to him. Is he disgustingly ignorant? Poor sharer in the folly of the wise, learn that Omniscience is not disgusted with him or with thee. Is he vicious? I commend not complacency in his vice; but where is thine immaculate robe before Him in whose sight the heavens are not clean? If the sovereign of the universe, all wise and holy, love thee, worm of the dust as thou art, with all thy boasting, it is surely no hard, no degrading task in thee to love a fellow-man a few degrees below thee in thine own imagination. Thou hast with him common weaknesses, infirmities, errors, and transgressions; God has and can have none: *He* cannot say, "I have, in common with this despised creature, a dependence on circumstances which lower this man and raise that, and might have made me what he is, and him what I am; the passions which have polluted him, or others as vile, rage in my bosom, and might, had temptation opportunely presented, have stained me with a guilt to which his is light; and if I own not his offences, yet am I conscious of others; I am, like him, the creature of sense and frailty, and too much a brother to be a judge." All this *He* cannot say of any creature, but the best man may and must say it of the worst, and yet he sees in that worst an object of the infinite and impartial and eternal love of God, and therefore of his own.

7. Whatever its infirmities or capacities, his love has endowed us with a common nature, deduced us from a common origin, and it designs for us ultimately a common destiny of joy. All these divided streams flowed from one fountain, and in one ocean shall their waters mingle. The very anticipation of our final union should be a present bond. The benevolent affections are our preparation for dwelling together in our Father's mansion: they are a fitness for

our future inheritance, which all must gain before they enter on its possession. How blissful to look on man as the child of God, who, whatever his wanderings and his sufferings, shall be recovered to the right path! How does it shame every supercilious and angry and ungenerous feeling! How does it make the heart glow with philanthropy, and render the brightest hopes subservient to the warmest affections!

If this view of the apostle's argument be correct, if there be such a connection between the love of God to man and that of men to each other, then must those systems which give the largest notions of the love of God be the most conducive to benevolence. Then must there be something pernicious, so far as their influence is felt and uncorrected, as to their social results, in all creeds which say, in effect, God does not love all; he will not save the non-elect; he will eternally torment, or annihilate even, the wicked. As far as such qualifications are admitted, the argument from his love is nullified, and its tendency is neutralised. If he so love us as yet to destroy some, why may not man's benevolence allow injury and destruction? It is not so delightful to the mind, it is not so expanding to the heart, to contemplate a Father in heaven making such tremendous differences, showing such tremendous partialities, to his common children on the earth. Away with such calumnies! nor let their narrowing influence survive their theoretical existence. Think better of God, and act up to the purer and loftier conceptions of his benignity which you derive from both reason and revelation. He is One. Oh, that here, as they shall be hereafter, his rational offspring may be one in peace and piety and love! Amen.

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